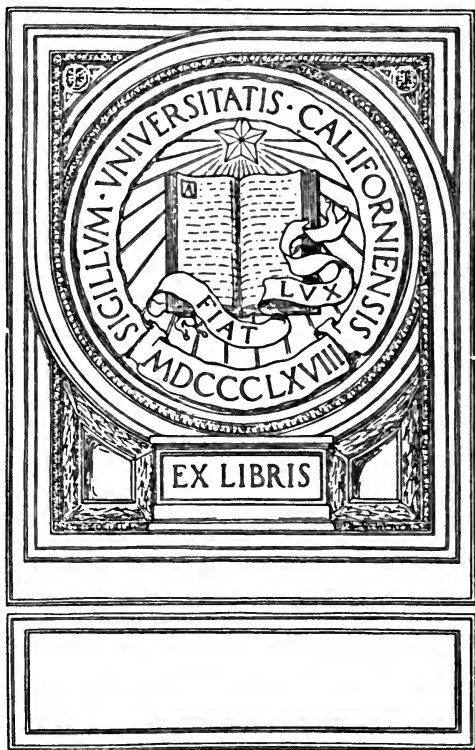


**THE ÆSTHETIC PURPOSE OF  
BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE  
AND OTHER ESSAYS**

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**THE  
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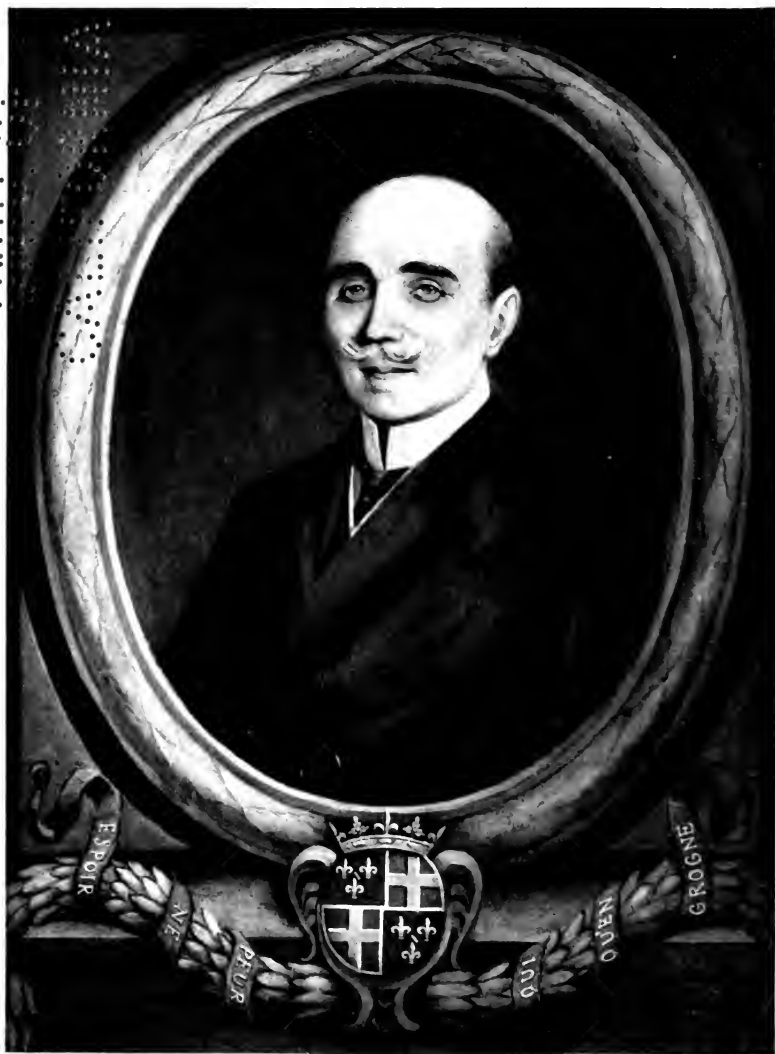
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**MY SENTIMENTAL ANCESTRESS.**

**THE SEVEN RICHEST HEIRESESSES  
OF FRANCE.**

**SIX GREAT PRINCESSES.**





*The Count de Süssens.*

THE ÆSTHETIC PURPOSE  
OF BYZANTINE ARCHI-  
TECTURE AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY THE  
COUNT DE SOISSONS

PROEM BY G. P. GOOCH

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TO VINH  
AIRPORT

## PROEM

OF the essays contained in this volume, that on Edward Munch appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, while most of the others were published in the *Contemporary Review*, to which Count de Soissons has for many years been a valued contributor. Sir Percy Bunting entertained a high opinion of his work, and the Count has recorded his friendship for the late Editor in the dedication of his work, "My Sentimental Ancestress." As the successor of Sir Percy, I have been asked to write a few words of introduction.

During his years of residence in England the author has built up a solid reputation as a critic of literature and art, and he combines in a rare degree the three essential qualifications of knowledge, insight, and expression. His wide acquaintance with many aspects of civilization is evidenced in all his writings, while his charming volumes on the nieces of Mazarin and the unruly daughters of the Regent exhibit his intimate familiarity with the history of his own country. In the second place he is gifted with the faculty of penetrating behind the form to the spirit, of interpreting the

thought of the poet and the artist, of seizing the significance of a movement or a school. And finally he has won an astonishing command over the resources of our language. Few living Englishmen possess such an easy mastery of the technique of verbal values which are needed to express the shades of meaning in a deeper analysis of thought and emotion.

Some years ago the Count collected his studies of Verlaine and D'Annunzio, Hauptmann and Sienkiewicz, Paderewski and Rodin, Segantini and Liebermann, in a volume entitled "In the Path of the Soul." The present work opens up new vistas along that winding and perilous track. It is indeed devoted exclusively to art ; but in studying the masterpieces of architecture, painting, and music, he fixes his gaze above all on the human beings who created them. Art, he declares emphatically, is the most sincere and the most direct expression of the soul.

The opening essay on Byzantine Architecture breathes that generous appreciation of the value of the Eastern Empire to civilization and Christendom which the world is at last learning to recognize. The incomparable majesty of Santa Sophia, again, has never inspired a more full-throated pæan. Byzantine art was the mingling of East and West, the marriage of colour and form, and its glowing rays are traced Westwards to the shrines of Venice and Monreale.



The greater part of the volume is devoted to painting. The second and third essays deal at length with the art of China and Japan, which is pronounced as mature as that of Europe. In both cases the creations are closely related to the life of the time, and the parallelism between the different stages of political and artistic development is clearly established. Our critic writes with a warmth of appreciation and a delicacy of insight worthy of Mr. Laurence Binyon, and he does not hesitate to bracket Hokusaj with Turner as the greatest landscape painter in the world.

Returning to the West, he selects five artists for discussion, three of whom have filled Europe with their fame. He speaks of Ingres with a whole-hearted devotion rarely inspired by that consummate master of form. While noting his debt to David and Raphael, he denies that the creator of "La Source" was immured in an icy classicism, and depicts him as a man of passionate temperament whose women were at once vigorous and invigorating. For the utterly dissimilar genius of Boecklin he has even higher praise. He declares the great romanticist the most interesting and original painter of modern times, and suggests that no colourist equals him, with the possible exception of Giorgione. To the rare genius of Manet and to his explosive influence on the destinies of French painting he also pays a striking tribute.

Felicien Rops and Munch have inspired a good

many monographs abroad, but are little known in England ; and the essays devoted to them will for that reason be read with special interest. The Belgian etcher, who settled in Paris at the age of thirty, was obsessed by a dark, brooding sensuality—poisoned, tortured, maddened by the conception of woman. The unsavoury subject is treated with much discretion by our critic, who does full justice to the wonderful gifts of the artist who was at the same time a master of social satire. Of the Norwegian, another fevered and passionate spirit whose elemental greatness is slowly dawning on the world, he writes with deep sympathy and understanding. Munch, he declares, expresses the phenomena of the soul directly through colour. No pages in this volume are more brilliant than those which describe the intolerable oppression of the Scandinavian landscape on the hyper-sensitive moral retina of the artist.

The appreciation of Strauss reveals the author as a master of the language of sound not less than of colour. We are conducted through the series of operas, from the Wagnerian "Guntram" and "Feuersnot" to the clashing discords of "Salomé" and "Electra," and we finally emerge on the sunlit landscape of the "Rosenkavalier," which our critic hails as a return to sanity and truth. No composer, however gifted, has a right to be incomprehensible.

Thus the task which Count de Soissons set out to accomplish is achieved. He communicates to his

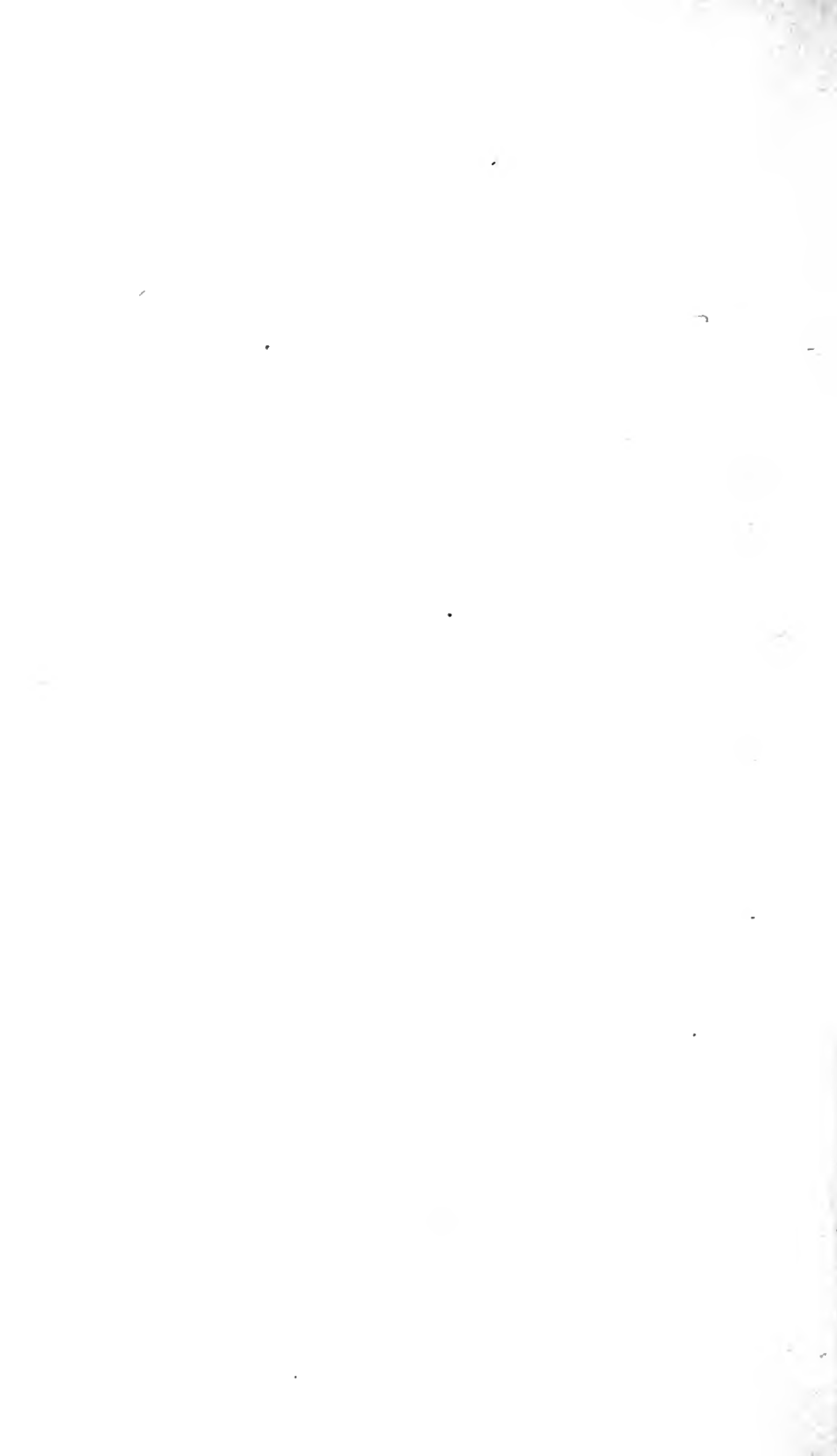
readers his frank enjoyment of every variety of art, and he teaches them to decipher the message which it brings from the distant horizons of the kingdom of the soul.

G. P. GOOCH.

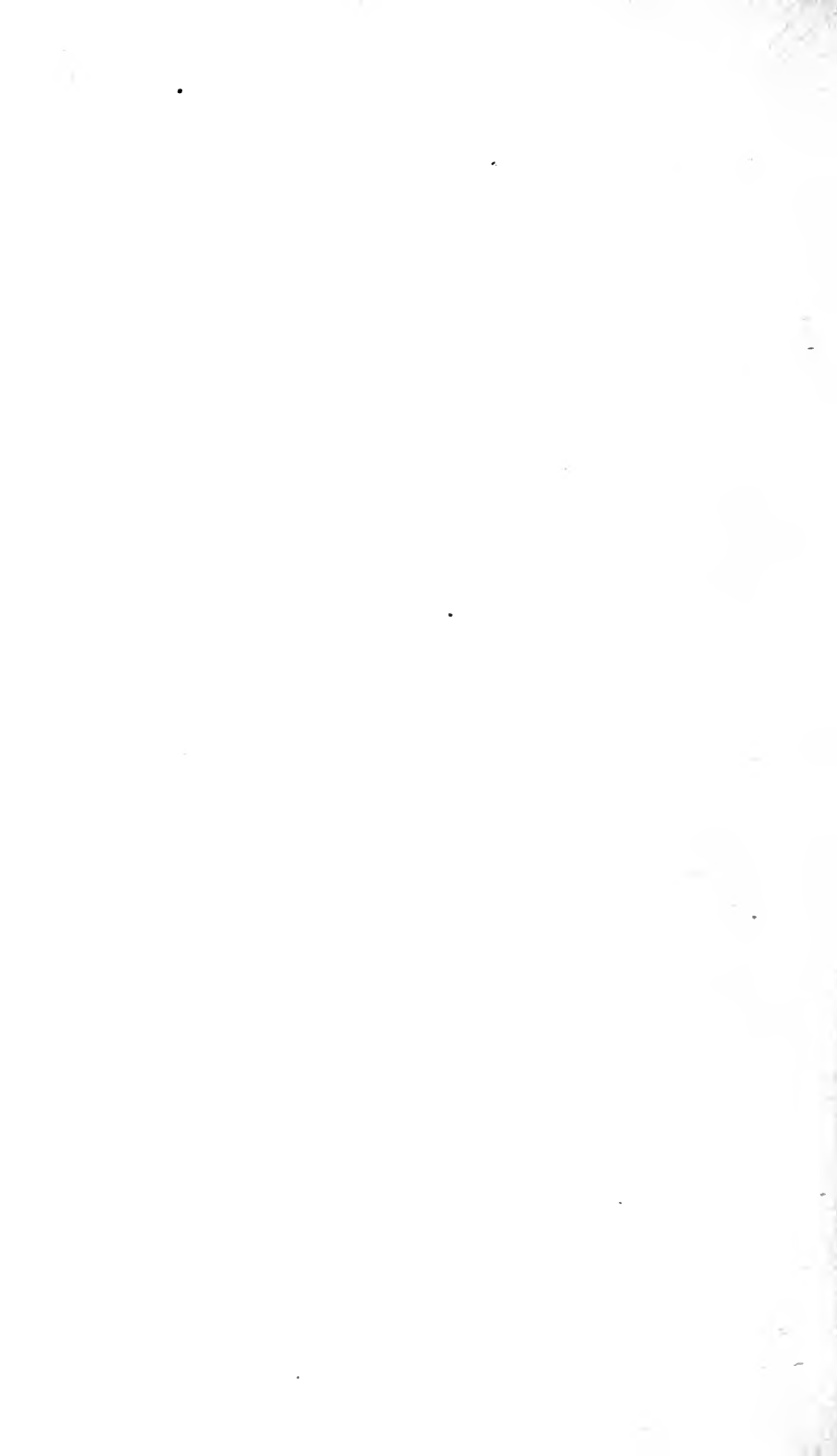


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**THE  
ÆSTHETIC PURPOSE OF  
BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE**







## THE ÆSTHETIC PURPOSE OF BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE

THE snowy barriers of the Himalayas do not so divide the two mighty civilizations of Asia—the Chinese communism of Confucius, and the Indian individualism of Vedas, for Asia is one in regard to love for the Universal and the Ultimate—as the notions of form and colour divide the East and the West. This is the standing antithesis between the art of the two continents. The art of the West rests on stability and decisiveness of form, which pertain almost exclusively to the intellectual part of the human Ego, whilst the art of the East depends on changeableness and volatility of colour, which belong to the province of the senses. The Western temperament, being intellectually strong, excels in form,\* while the Eastern is sensually weak, and therefore its superiority rests on colour. This verity becomes evident when one travels eastwards through the European towards the Asian Continent ; as soon as one passes the Prussian boundaries, within which the dominating colours, especially in dress, are grey and black, the dominion of bright hues seems to increase with every mile as one advances towards the mysterious East ; the bright

\* *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1904.

shades of red, blue, yellow, and green shine in the variegated dresses of peasants, who look like lovely wild flowers in the midst of the verdure of the fields of Galicia, Malo-Russia, and the Ukraine ; and when one reaches Moscow, when one ascends the heights where the golden Kremlin glitters, and from that eminence looks on the Mecca of Russia, one is amazed at the liveliness and variety of rainbow-like colours lavishly displayed on walls, roofs, cupolas, and domes of churches and houses. One realizes then how universal is the sense of colour in the East, how deeply it pervades the whole of life, how widely it is diffused even on trivial objects. In the Orient, where life is in its most primitive and simplest stage, colour is manifested in the strongest manner and in the richest hues ; so much so that it becomes a sense, that it is a natural element, while with us it is an acquired taste, put on the surface as a decoration of life and not a part of it. Colour is not indigenous to Western life, and its presence may be rightly attributed to Eastern influence, which came to us by channels too many to enumerate ; but it is sufficient to say that Alexander the Great and his followers brought to the West the polychrome decoration from the East, that this was inherited from Byzantium, whence it came to Venice and thence spread throughout the whole of Europe, while the invasion of the Moors introduced colour into Spain. If we admire the glow in pictures of some of the masters of the Netherlands, it was brought there by that conjurer of brilliant hues, Rubens, from Venice, and the proud mistress of the Adriatic had learned it

from her ally and friend, Constantinople. Reynolds, the greatest English colourist after Turner, brought also his rich suffusion of hues, and his great skill in melting down the obstruction of form from the town in which St. Mark's is the centre and heart of colour inspiration.

It is clear, then, that one of the two essential elements of art, colour, is supplied by the emotional and sensuous East; the other element, form, has been furnished by the intellectual and self-restrained West. As the great qualities of the colour of the East are simplicity and strength, one finds the same attributes in the form of the West. The form of the West and colour of the East are remarkable for opposite characteristics, for while Western feeble temerities of half tones and neutral tints look debilitated when compared with the opulent and full tones of Eastern colour, the capricious, involved, eccentric, confused, and fantastical shapes of Eastern form—in China, India, Japan, Persia, and Arabia—look weak, unstable, and undecided when compared with the Western form, full of virility, precision, restraint, and serenity. This is the result of the difference in the temperaments of the people—according to Hippolyte Taine of the climate—the East being inhabited by races who are impotent because of their emotional character, and consequently wanting in that energy, strength of purpose, concentration, and sober judgment so necessary for the perfect mastery of form. It is true that in the classic temple, which was the simple conception of strong intellect, there was a certain amount of colour; but in Greek architecture,

*Japan*

## 14 THE ÆSTHETIC PURPOSE OF

ruled by the law of proportions, by the sense of decision and exactness, which constitute the foundation of the whole effect of structure, it was only like a smile on a lovely countenance, and but helped to produce the play of light and shadow, lending expression and animation to lintel construction of stone and marble, in which horizontal and perpendicular lines have a definite reciprocal relation ; it was not essential to it.

The union of form and colour was to produce a perfect work of art, for which the great qualities of power, of combination, of dogged perseverance, of steadfast endurance and self-sacrifice, were necessary. To accomplish this great work the Byzantine Greeks were called. Antioch and Alexandria \* cultivated the ancient Hellenic traditions, but they modified them under the influence of the East. Pursuing their example, Byzantium, a new town, having taken up in her turn the direction of the Greek art, was going to follow a road until now unknown. Hellenic culture influenced Byzantine art,† while the East influenced the inheritance of free Greece, and taught her the hieratic gravity of attitudes, and especially the magic of colour. The Byzantine art grew on the soil on which the capital of the triumphant Christ was built, and that new art was going to realize a dream of grandeur—the union of form and colour. The Edict of Constantine, promulgated in 323 A.D., established

\* *Histoire de l'Art*, by A. Michel ; see chapter on Byzantine Art, by Gabriel Miller.

† *Orient oder Rom*, by Strzygowski. *Fondements Helléniques de l'Art Byzantin*, by Ajnalov.

the capital of the Eastern Empire at Byzantium originated by colonists from Megara, in the seventh century B.C., and it was there that there was to be created a new and wonderful masterpiece of art, in which the genius of the Byzantines succeeded in fusing in one peerless whole the Western, well defined and perfectly balanced form, with the elusive and capricious colour brought from the dreamy East by the victorious ancestors of the Greeks, and appropriated by their active and cultured colonists. Previously to this the unsurpassable Greek genius had gathered the architectural fragments, forms, and lines from Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt, and had harmonized them in a perfect classical temple ; now, stimulated by the opportunity furnished by the demands of a new capital of a great Empire, the Byzantines appropriated from the East the diffused attempts at colour delineation and, uniting them with their former achievement in regard to form, created a new and perfect style, which was properly and rightly called Byzantine, because it was in Byzantium that were shaped, co-ordinated, and harmonized, new forms, formulas, and canons ; it was there that were manifested and realized aspirations which must be regarded as *la propre raison d'être de la nouvelle cité*.

Under Justinian art reached its full expression and its golden age. When the lowest dregs of the people in Byzantium burnt, on the 15th of January, 532, the pre-Justinian church called Sophia, the work of restoration began on the 23rd of the following month, and the solemn dedication of the new structure took place on December 26, 537 ! It was

dedicated to nothing less than "Holy Wisdom," and it illustrates well the great wisdom of the ruler at whose command it was erected; it shows in the highest degree the genius of the Byzantine Greeks, personified in Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, the greatest architects that ever lived. The splendour and beauty of Santa Sophia shine above all man's creation, for it is a marvel of audacious logic, an inimitable and exceptional success. However, one must bear in mind that whilst the greatest eulogies are rightly bestowed upon that church—the most perfect yet erected by any Christian people—those praises must be applied only to the perfect representation of the Byzantine interior, for externally the building possesses little architectural beauty beyond what is due to its mass, and the varied outline arising from the mechanical contrivances necessary to resist the thrust of its internal construction.\* The internal arrangements are complete and perfect, both from a mechanical and from an artistic point of view.

In numerous books on Byzantine architecture, written by authors of all nations, we find the exact description of details, excellent reproductions of decorations, scrupulous measurements of proportions, of mouldings, and an abundance of rhapsodic exclamations over its beauty; but all that, while it enlarges our detailed knowledge of the subject, does not give us the slightest notion as to what æsthetic purposes the Byzantine architects had while

\* *History of Architecture in all Countries*, by James Fergusson.

creating a new and original style, and it does not help us to formulate a clear æsthetic estimate of their achievement. Thanks to Winckelmann, Lessing, and Goethe, who still remain unrivalled in the province of art criticism, we have quite a clear idea that the creation of a study of form, perfect in symmetry and precision, in which every line and shape was to be harmonized into the realization of a common aim, was the purpose of classic architecture ; but we do not know what end the carefully described and faithfully depicted buildings of the Christian Greek style served.

What, then, was the æsthetic purpose the Byzantines had set before themselves, when they conceived the plan of Santa Sophia, that wonderful and almost fairy-like construction, which has aroused the admiration and excited the astonishment of the whole artistic world? Santa Sophia owes its supreme position in the world of art not only to its magnitude and splendour, but to the mechanical skill of its builders, and especially to the intrinsic beauty of the interior, unequalled by the great mediæval cathedrals of Europe ; for no Gothic architect ever rose to the conception of a hall 100 ft. wide, 250 ft. in length, and 180 ft. high. Neither the Pantheon nor any of the vaulted halls of Rome equals the nave of Santa Sophia in extent, or in the cleverness of construction, or in beauty of design. Nor was there anything erected during the ten centuries which elapsed from the transference of the capital to Byzantium till the building of the great cathedrals which can be compared with it.\*

\* James Fergusson, *lib. cit.*

It is evident from the Pàntheon at Rome that the Romans had mastered the difficulties of domic construction long before the transference of the seat of power to Byzantium, the Pantheon being, up to this time, the largest single dome ever constructed by the hand of man. Simple and grand as it undoubtedly is, it has several defects in its design, and these defects the Byzantines remedied, and accomplished the extraordinary achievement of building the dome in the air and not on the ground, as did the Romans in the Pantheon. They have succeeded in raising into the immeasurable air the spherical-shaped great helmet of the dome,\* which bending over, like the radiant heavens, embraces the church, and makes it beautiful indeed. And wondrous it is to see how the dome gradually rises, wide below, and growing less as it reaches higher.

It is true that other churches, built since, have great domes : St. Peter's at Rome, and Santa Maria's at Florence being each 126 ft. ; St. Paul's, London, is within a foot of the same diameter ; but these domes are only adjuncts to the whole of the church. None of them is integral with or supported by the rest of the design, and all tend to dwarf the buildings they are attached to rather than heighten the general effect. Santa Sophia's dome alone is a perfect creation, for it constitutes an inseparable and indispensable part of the wondrous whole. This marvel of Greek genius was very ably described by Procopius of Cæsarea † and sung by Paulus the

\* *τολος*.

† *De Justiniani Imperatoris ædificiis, libri sex*, Parisiis, 1537.



Silentiary \* in a beautiful poem written in Homeric metre and phrasing.

The description of the church left by Procopius is so masterly that at least a part of it should be recalled to our minds on this very proper occasion. He says:—

“The church presents a most glorious spectacle, extraordinary to those who are told of it. In height it rises to the very heavens, and overtops the neighbouring buildings like a ship anchored among them, appearing above the rest of the city, while it adorns and forms a part of it. The length and breadth are so judiciously arranged that it appears to be both long and wide without being disproportionate. It is distinguished by indescribable beauty, excelling both in size and harmony of its measures, having no part excessive and none deficient; being more magnificent than ordinary buildings and much more elegant than those which are not of so just a proportion. The church is singularly full of light and sunshine; you would declare that the place is not lighted by the sun from without, but that the rays are produced within itself, such an abundance of light there is.

“A spherical-shaped dome—*τολος*—standing upon this circle makes it exceedingly beautiful; from the lightness of the building, it does not appear to rest on a solid foundation, but to cover the place beneath as though it were suspended from

\* He was the chief of the Royal Silentaries; they were Court officials, whose office was an exalted one, as they ranked with the Senators. They were employed on all kinds of service, not unfrequently becoming the historians of the Emperor.

heaven by the fabled golden chain. All these parts, surprisingly joined to one another in the air, suspended one from another, and resting only on that which is next to them, form the work into one admirably harmonious whole, which spectators do not dwell upon for long in the mass, as each individual part attracts the eyes to itself. Seeing the art which appears everywhere, men contract their eyebrows and they look at each part, and are unable to comprehend such workmanship, but always depart from thence stupefied by their incapacity.

“Who could tell of the beauty of the columns and marbles with which the church is adorned? One would think that one had come upon a meadow full of flowers in bloom! . . . Whoever enters there to worship perceives at once that it is not by any human strength or skill, but by the favour of God, that this work has been perfected; the mind rises sublime to commune with God, feeling that He cannot be far off, but must especially love to dwell in the place which He has chosen; and this is felt not only when a man sees it for the first time, but it always makes the same impression upon him, as though he had never beheld it before. No one ever became weary of this spectacle, but those who are in the church delight in what they see, and, when they leave, magnify it in their talk.” \*

Procopius' disquisition, most able and beautiful in its simplicity, may be supplemented by the explanation that as a single dome of the area of the central and two semi-domes would not have appeared nearly as large, and would have over-

\* *Procopius of Cæsarea*, lib. cit.

powered everything else in the building, the great Byzantine architects avoided this by constructing a cluster of domes, rising one above the other, until they culminate in the wide, light, central dome. Thus the whole system is raised on a succession of concave surfaces, mutually self-supporting, and lesser domes, half domes, and segments of domes, holding together and rising like a pile of bubbles, realize their appropriate issue at last in the central perfect specimen, in which all culminate, and to which they converge.\* Nothing so perfectly artistic has been built on the same scale before or since ; in these arrangements Santa Sophia stands alone, and appears unique among the great structures of the world.

By building Hagia Sophia the Byzantines completed the Roman arch principle, for it is a composition arranged on such a basis. Those lofty curves, supported until they sweep victoriously in a culminating effort across the vast central gape, are the most perfect representation that exists in the world of the resources and possibilities that are latent in that principle. The result they achieved, in its purity and consistency, is far beyond anything of which the Romans had any conception. This clearly demonstrates that the Byzantines contributed very largely, and in the most important manner, to the development of the science of construction by "the arrangement by which the thrust of the dome was received by the pendentives—the stonework between the arches in the shape of a triangle, the lower angle of each triangle, being compressed

\* *Edinburgh Review*, men. cit.

where the arches unite, is slender, while the upper part becomes wider as it rises in the space between them—and transmitted by them to the supports, and that they created a new domical style which will remain for ever characteristic of their genius."

The daintily wrought and gracefully displayed flexures, winding throughout the whole interior, well delineated, marked out with distinctness, clearly defined, and decidedly structural, were proposed as studies of form, and were united in such clearly marked arrangement that they constitute by themselves the most beautiful decoration ever conceived for an interior of a building, and required no other beautifying factor. However, this did not satisfy the Byzantines, who received from the sensuous East the love for colour, and consequently Santa Sophia was most lavishly decorated with resplendent hues of costly mosaics. As the pristine splendour of the decorative colour effect has been dimmed by time, and the Mussulmans have disfigured the adornment by partial obliteration and by the childish display of hideous round panels on which the "Arab's wisdom" assumes anything but a decorative effect, we must borrow from the Homeric description left us by Paulus the Silentiary, in order to have some idea of the result of the influence of the colour brought from the East, united with the form of the West. Paulus sang:—

"Yet who, even in the measure of Homer, shall sing of the marble pastures gathered on the lofty walls and spreading pavements of the mighty church? These the iron with its metal tooth has graved—the fresh green from Carystus, and many-

coloured marbles from the Phrygian range, in which a rosy blue mingles with white, or it shines bright with flowers of deep red and silver. There is a wealth of porphyry, too, powdered with bright stars, that has once laden the river boat on the broad Nile. You would see an emerald green from Sparta, and the glittering marble, with many veins, which the tool has worked in from the deep bosom of the Italian hills, showing slanting streaks, blood-red and livid white, or which the Lybian sun, warming with his golden light, has nurtured in the deep-bosomed clefts of the hills of the Moors, of crocus colour, glittering like gold ; and the produce of the Celtic crags, a wealth of crystals, like milk poured here and there on a flesh of glittering black. There is the precious onyx, as if gold were shining through it ; and the marble that the land of Atrax yields, not from some upland glen, but from coast lands ; in part, fresh green as the sea or emerald stone, or again like blue cornflowers in grass, with here and there a drift of fallen snow—a sweet mingled contrast on the dark shining surface.”

This extraordinary lavishness of colour adornment satisfies the writers on Byzantine art, and they use a profusion of superlatives to express their wonderment ; but it did not content the genius of the Byzantine Greeks, who realized that Santa Sophia was only a most wonderful and perfect study of form. The reason for their dissatisfaction probably was that the rich mosaics did not become here an architectural motive ; they did not determine the architectural style ; they were reduced to a mere surface covering, to a decorative adornment, and,

consequently, they were of no real significance and true importance. The Byzantines understood this, and as they were moreover prompted by the Oriental sense of colour as yet unrealized in art, Santa Sophia was left a solitary, unique, and inimitable manifestation of their most masterly attempt. They preserved the dome system of building, which they found most appropriate for the purpose of interior adornment, for the display of colour through the means of the new decorative material, viz., mosaic. Having come to the firm conclusion that if they wished to give a proper recognition in art to colour, they must attenuate and even remove the importance of form, they determined to eliminate from their new structures, friezes, pilasters, galleries, cornices, architraves, and archivolts; they further resolved to retain from the domical architecture they created while building Santa Sophia, rounded and curved shapes, for they thought these more advantageous for the use of the new building material and the display of colour. Only when the peerless church consecrated to "Holy Wisdom" was completed within, they understood that the great display of crisp and lofty arches and well-defined architectural lines, graceful and varied curves, which constitute the main fascination and beauty of Justinian's unrivalled construction, must be made simpler, or even entirely excluded; they comprehended, too, that the domes and semi-domes, which in this masterful building were the greatest triumph of architecture, on account of their exquisite daintiness, charming gracefulness, and surprising variety of shape, must be made less elegant but larger,

less dainty but deeper, less airy but lower, for only in that manner would the artists have larger spaces for the display of decorations, and only then would form not preponderate over colour.

Another very important change introduced by the Greeks into the new style was the modification of light. For the purpose of showing to a better advantage the interior colouring, the Byzantines built their new churches in such a manner as to have in them more play of light and shade. They understood that abundance of light was advantageous for bringing out the beauty of form, but that for the keeping of the effect of glow of colour, especially of mosaic, a solemn twilight was essential; for it is only in *chiaroscuro* that glow works. This important lesson the Greeks learned from Santa Sophia where there is such a profusion of light that under its influence the rich hues of mosaics look faded, strange as it seems, and as if sprinkled with grey ashes.

All these changes concerning the interior decorations and manner of lighting the Byzantine churches are so essential and of such consequence that they show how erroneous is the notion of those who regard Santa Sophia as the prototype of Byzantine architecture, the glorious rays of which diffused throughout the Christian Orient and reached Palermo, Venice, Ravenna, Novgorod, Kieff, the Caucasus, and finally, after so many centuries—this is most strange indeed!—London, where the most artistic cathedral was built at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century. The Greeks were right to be proud of their civilization,

a pride which made them sing during solemn processions an anthem\* in which it was called "the eye of the world."

It is obvious that the Byzantine artists introduced those changes with a clearly defined purpose, namely, for the advantage of using mosaic as structural and not as decorative material, which went to make colour the great factor in architecture.

In order to have a clear notion concerning the differences between decorative and structural employment of mosaic, one should bear in mind that architecture is a science of building, of manipulating form; and consequently, if one wishes to create a new architectural style, one is obliged to express an idea of a different form of construction. The Byzantines, after they built Santa Sophia, understood that if they wished to create a new architectural style, they could no longer employ mosaic decoratively, that is to say superficially, for in that case the new material would not efface the whole structural system of marble, brick, or stone architecture; if mosaic should be applied merely as covering the material of which a building was constructed, that material would be visible, would not convey the notion of a different form of construction, and there would be nothing new. This is the most important point. Hence the already mentioned changes in domical system, which did not rest any longer on the wondrous variety of domes and semi-domes, and on the exquisite daintiness of well-defined shapes, but whose dominating features were spaces, as large as they could be

\* *Art Byzantin*, by Gabriel Millet, *lib. cit.*



obtained by the construction of vast domes, of plain vaults, and of deep apses, all darkened and solemn, lavishly covered with glittering gold and beautiful with figures and groups blooming with bright hues of blue and crimson predominating; in a word, the realization of the Eastern idea of colour. By covering the walls with mosaics in that new manner, in buildings constructed for the purpose, the Greeks reached at last their aim: they discarded the defined and hard structural form, and made colour an architectural motive.

The best examples of the elaboration of this theory are to be found in St. Mark's at Venice, and in three churches in Palermo, the Monreale Cathedral, the Capella Palatina, and the Martorana Chapel. St. Mark's is too well known to be described here, and it will suffice to say that although apparently it is built on the same domical system as is Santa Sophia, it is totally different; for while the admirable church of Constantinople is only a most able development of the arch principle, and an extraordinary elaboration of dome theory as a constructive motive, in which colour adorns form, in St. Mark's, where there is a complete absence of well-defined shapes, mosaic—that brittle, flexible, soft, and plastic material—dictates the entire interior arrangement, and, in that manner, composes the structure and becomes the governing architectural factor. If Santa Sophia were stripped of all its marvellous mosaic adornment, it would remain as beautiful as ever—nay, its wondrous curves would have more decisive effect; but if the same were done to St. Mark's, the building would appear bare,

and look like a cavern cut out in a rock, lacking in the elegance and variety at which one marvels in the church of "Holy Wisdom." In St. Mark's, mosaic is used in accordance with the principle which demands that the whole structural system belonging to stone or brick architecture must be entirely effaced; which in this case is so well accomplished that when one looks at those vast domes, deep recesses, and dim apses, one has the impression that the whole structure is built of solid gold, studded with precious stones, and not with bricks. This is the essential difference between the first achievement of the Byzantines at Constantinople and the further development of the notion of the control of colour structure, for mosaic, being a plastic and soft building material, is a colour material as well; consequently, when the Greeks gave preference to mosaic over putty, which possesses also softness and plasticity, in effect they employed colour as an architectural motive. In that manner they succeeded in effacing the structural features of the old formal architecture and had, this time, created a new style.

Perhaps nowhere have the Greeks shown their pursuit of artistic effect better than in some Sicilian Byzantine churches. In the first place the Monreale Cathedral occupies a very important position, not only by its imposing proportions, but also by the mosaic decoration in which the great struggle between the Eastern sense of colour and the Western conception of form is evident, and the issue of that contest was whether mosaic should remain a decorative or structural material. In this

building it is fully demonstrated that there where the Greeks, knowing what was at stake, succeeded in carrying out their notion of control of colour over form, they have produced the most astonishing result, and shown to great advantage the structural value of mosaic by causing the rich folds of glittering gold to dominate the interior, and in that manner they placed the substantiality of the constructive material beyond all doubt. The victory of the Byzantines was here most complete. The mosaics displayed in the Monreale Cathedral astonish by their incomparable richness and splendour; one is dazzled by the beauty and confounded by the grandeur of the work; \* one is awed by the multitude of figures displayed on a surface of six thousand square metres; one is seized with wonder while looking at those cunningly wrought forms of saints; one remains speechless at the daring of artists; one feels the might, the grandeur, and the infinity of religion. The God revealed in the Monreale Cathedral is the Almighty Lord, who demands homage and adoration.

In the Capella Palatina the Greeks were still more successful; for here, as the chapel is but a small building, the competition between the Byzantines and the Western artists was less acute, and consequently, while in the Monreale Cathedral the Greeks were given only the control of the apses, which is of lesser importance, in the Capella Palatina they succeeded in mastering the dome; this gave them a fine chance to display to the best advantage their artistic pursuit and taste, which

\* *L'Art Byzantin dans l'Italie Méridionale*, by Ch. Diehl.

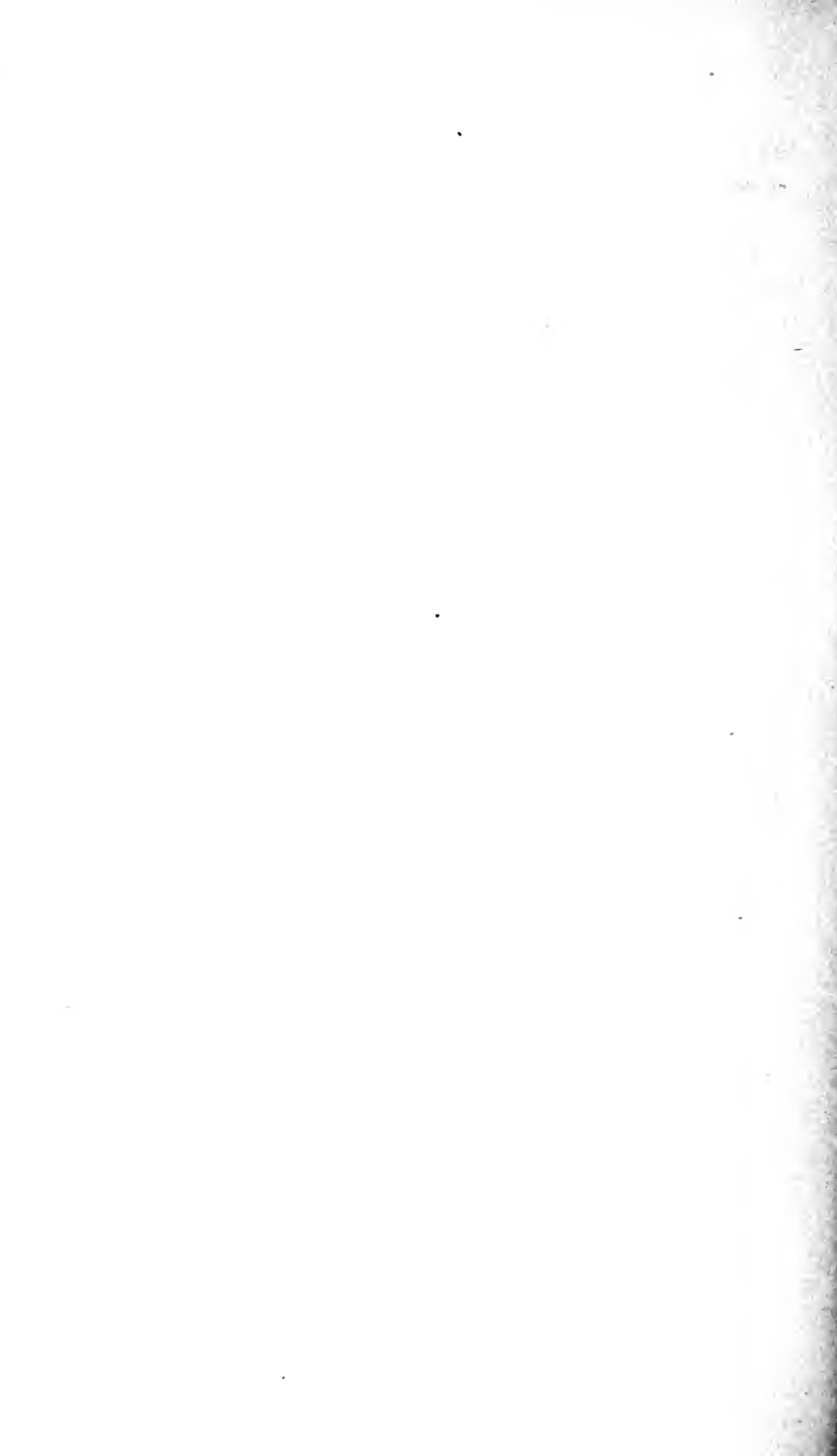
they did in such a manner that the Capella Palatina is the pearl of their art. Perhaps nowhere does one understand better the mighty and marvellous effect of colour mosaic decorations, of which the Byzantines were so fond. While in the Monreale Cathedral one bends one's head in order to offer to the Lord the most respectful prayer, at the Capella Palatina one is inclined to ecstatic reverie.

However, the most successful and the most perfect little masterpiece the Byzantines ever built and decorated is the Martorana Chapel. One may say, without falling into the pitfall of exaggeration, that it would be impossible adequately to express its unrivalled beauty in words, for it is the most significant construction in the world, notwithstanding its very small dimensions, not only because of its æsthetic importance, but also from this point of view, that here the Byzantines embodied in the best and clearest manner their idea at which they so steadily and so strenuously aimed. In that little building, in which they did not allow any structural element to appear, they have established as the authoritative law that mosaic must be employed not decoratively but structurally, and for this purpose they wrought the whole building in unbroken gold, which makes one believe that the whole is of precious material.

Nevertheless, the enthusiastic rapture over this perfect gem of Byzantine art should not make us depreciate the great importance of St. Mark's at Venice, for, in the first place, it was there that the positive assertion of the right of the material to establish laws in congruity with its own nature,

which marks the solid treatment of mosaic and the true character of the style, was shown in a decisive manner ; secondly, because no other building in the world had more influence on art than had St. Mark's, by the medium of its marvellously glowing mosaics. That influence was felt and manifested at first amongst the Venetian painters, some of whom are still inimitable in their dazzling suffusion of colour and in their skill in softening hard shapes ; thence it spread throughout the whole of Europe. It was through the mediation of Venice, through her great love for Eastern civilization, that the sense of colour brought from the East was diffused amongst the Western nations.

Thus through the spaces of the great church at Constantinople came rays of wondrous art, expelling clouds of care ; and again through another church—at Venice—our mind became filled with the joy of colour, both showing us the way to the living God.



# **THE PICTORIAL ART OF CHINA**





## THE PICTORIAL ART OF CHINA

WHEN Commodore Perry anchored the American squadron at Uraga and broke the wilful aloofness of Japan from the outer world, Europeans became acquainted with the Japanese, and subsequently with the Asian, art through the medium of wood-cuts and colour-prints; these interested greedy dealer-collectors, democratic writers, and naturalistic artists, who caused commonplace notions concerning Asian art to be imposed on the world. The dealer-collectors praised those artists whose works were rare, in order to satisfy their mercenary propensities; the writers fell into raptures over the modern democratic development of Japanese art, overlooking that which was really grand in the artistic movement of the inhabitants of the charming Isles of Nippon, and extolling Japanese prints whose chief value for the most part was that of popular, social, and anecdotal documents. As to the artists, they—being nowadays principally the makers of pictures, and only occasionally and unconsciously creators—saw in the works of Asian artists almost exclusively the technical part, but were incapable of seizing that which constitutes the real value of pictures; accordingly they praised only that which corresponded with their own temperament and personal talent.

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Thus Whistler emphasized in his pictures—and this was the best part of his artistic activity—the elegant subtlety of colour-prints and the capricious way the Japanese painted their landscapes. Degas liked and imitated—although not very successfully—their fantastically easy way of forming groups, as well as their unsurpassable daring of composition. Monet fancied their colouring full of freshness and life. Manet has borrowed from them his harmonious fireworks of colours, while the French poster-makers have learned the decorative use of lines and surfaces. As to the fundamental principles—that is to say, creative power, synthesis, suggestiveness, freedom for play of fancy, and opening large views on depths difficult to be expressed—all that was passed almost unnoticed by writers on art; the fact being that from amongst numerous books—some of them very important on account of size—there is only one in the English language, that of Mr. Laurence Binyon,\* that is of true and great consequence. There is nothing of equal excellence in any other literature. The patronizing, complacent Westerners condescended to acknowledge that the art of the Eastern barbarians was possessed of certain external qualities, but decided autocratically and superficially that the Asian artists were inferior to Europeans intellectually and in creative power.

As to Chinese art, the current notion is that the Japanese have improved on, and even surpassed, it. Chinese art is associated in our minds with the

\* *Painting in the Far East*. London: Edward Arnold, 1908.

productions of its decadence—especially in the ceramic art—which was imposed on Europe by the manufacturers and merchants of Canton, who discovered a fount of riches in these worthless, monotonous, exhausted conventions, weak and spiritless in shape, and obnoxious because of their too bright and inharmonious colours. The consequence of all this is that the real nature of Chinese art is known only by a very few students outside of Asia.

The Japanese paintings executed on rolls of silk—called *makimonos* if unfolded horizontally and *kakemonos* if they are unrolled vertically—were almost unknown until 1881, when the British Museum purchased William Anderson's collection, the exhibition of which was held in 1888. At the beginning of 1911 Mrs. Olga Wegener sold to the British Museum nearly one hundred and fifty most important pictures, which she acquired during her sojourn in China. Still more recently Dr. Aurel Stein, sent on the joint initiative of the India Office and the Trustees of the British Museum to make researches in Eastern Turkestan, discovered in a vault at Tun-huang, where they were walled up at the beginning of the eleventh century, a number of Chinese pictures of Buddhist religious subjects of extraordinary interest. Those pictures, together with the collections acquired from Mrs. Wegener and Anderson, which were on exhibition in the British Museum Print Room, form the most important collection of Asian art either in Europe or in America, where the Boston Fine Arts Museum has a number of valuable Japanese paintings.

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This exhibition, made not for the vulgar display of unrivalled wealth in precious masterpieces of the Far East, but for serious purposes of culture, gave an opportunity to those who are in quest of beauty to correct erroneous notions concerning Asian art; for here they could study the pictorial art of the East through a period of some fifteen hundred years, from the fourth to the present century. Perchance this exhibition will open an era for the development of a new art—with lofty aims as was that of some periods in China—and of this there is an imperative need.

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The first impression one receives from looking at the Chinese pictures gathered in the Print Room concerns colour, and arouses sensations which until now were considered, not only by the people at large but by the Western æsthetes as well, to be characteristic of the emotional, feminine, and sensuous East; while the intellectual, manly, and sober West was supposed to excel in ideas of form.\* We all thought the West trivial, uncertain, and weak in colour, while the East was eccentric, capricious, and unstable in form; and that this constituted an antithesis between Asia and Europe. Now we may convince ourselves that during the great periods of Asian art, and especially that of the Celestial Empire, colour was subordinate, if not entirely eliminated, and never a predominant element. Both the Chinese and Japanese developed the art of tone during the best periods of their

\* *Edinburgh Review*, 1904.

history of painting, but almost, if not entirely, left out colour.

It is true that the sensuous Easterners are full of appreciation of colour, which is profusely and universally diffused in their countries ; but their fondness for it is limited to inferior, if not trivial, objects, such as tiles, embroideries, carpets, silk fabrics, and articles of clothing, thus making colour, in the way they employ it, not an æsthetic question, but a matter of life.

Then we can see that, although the Asian artists proceed in a different way from ours in their search for the beautiful, their art is as fully mature in its own way as is ours. The artistic pursuits of the Orientals vary from ours in this way, that theirs is an art of line rather than of colour. The main tradition of art in China comes from caligraphy, combined with flat, slightly coloured spaces that intensify and give charm to the harmony of line. Limited to line, the painters of Asia have concentrated centuries of study on the effort to make that line intimately expressive of form ; and with mere contour they succeeded in producing the illusion of perfect modelling. The very ease with which relief can be represented by shadows, as with us, has taken away from our painters the necessity for this concentration, and weakened their sense of expressive line.\* The painters of the East have succeeded in giving life to their figures, and that is the essential thing we demand from them.

As one can see, the means of communicating beauty in the sensuous manner employed by the

\* Laurence Binyon, *lib. cit.*

Easterners is different from that used by the Westerners. To write in Chinese beautifully requires a similar command of the brush to that of a painter; the greater the degree of that accomplishment, the greater painter is the man who possesses it and can express through the brush not only the forms of reality but the rhythmical beauty innate in the formed and varied stroke of an artist-scrivener. A fine specimen of the calligraphic art is as much valued as a beautiful picture; for in both the sweep should communicate the artist's mood and thought, and therefore be intense with life.

Then the painters of the East always remember that the principal aim of a picture is not to teach, to moralize, or to tell a story, but to fill and decorate a flat surface, which means that their efforts at the development and arrangement of colour harmonies are undisturbed by any other tendencies or purposes. The idea of harmonious sensation has such a hold on the Eastern painters, that they remain still and unconfused by the problems of *chiaroscuro*, to which the Western artists became bound by the intellectual painters of Italy. Our artists are not satisfied with the idea of organic beauty, of harmony of lines and colours, of coherence and concentration, and they try to represent the visible world by striving to equal sculpture in producing shape, by vying with architecture in creating well-arranged spaces, and by asking help from optics to simulate distances. As soon as an artist begins to think how to produce the likeness of an object, of a figure as it appears in Nature, his

mind is distracted from the main purpose of the picture—this is to say, harmony and decorativeness of lines and colours; his sense of that harmony grows feeble, and becomes dubious.

The painters of the Far East are not disturbed by science, the development of which is commonly assumed with us to be an advance in art. In current European criticism of painting there is almost always talk about perspective, anatomy, and optical laws, the command of which does not increase in the slightest the artistic value of a work, but simply helps artists to realize efficiently their imaginative ideas. The encroachment of science is detrimental to art, for the laws of one cannot be applied to the other, which verity was clearly expressed by one of the greatest of art critics, Goethe, when he said, "Art is not entirely subject to natural necessities, but has laws of its own." Sad experience teaches us that pictures painted several hundred years ago with pigments the production of which was not due to modern scientific chemistry are still resplendent with beautifully vivid colours, while those which were executed with scientific preparation have become black after a few years. Then how ugly are the aniline tints! Consequently one may say that chemistry has had a bad effect on our sense of colour, while machinery, through which nowadays many articles are made, has ruined, degraded, and vitiated our sense of form.

The aim of Asian art is not the outward semblance but the informing and inner spirit of objects represented. Throughout the whole history of Asiatic

art, with the exception of the popular movement in Japan, this is the prevailing and dominating preoccupation of the Eastern artists, who reproduce only that which is essential and permanent in the painted subject; hence the deliberate elimination of shadows from their pictures.

As far back as the fifth century a Chinese æsthete, named Shakaku, formulated the criticism of painting in six canons, in which are set forth the conceptions of art that already existed in the minds of the sons of the Celestial Empire, and are still respected by all except a small number of artists of the eighteenth century who were led astray from their safe artistic road and conducted into the wilderness of realism in art by Europeans. These six canons of Chinese æsthetics are: (1) Rhythmic vitality, or the life-movement of the spirit through the rhythm of things; (2) organic structure; (3) the law of conformity with nature; (4) appropriate colouring; (5) arrangement; (6) finish. One should remember that the Chinese æsthete assigns the principal place to rhythmical beauty; for, as Mr. Laurence Binyon rightly said, "A man of art is an incarnation of the genius of rhythm, manifesting the living spirit of things with a clearer beauty and intenser power than the gross impediments of complex matter allow to be transmitted to our senses in the visible world around us. A picture is conceived as a sort of apparition from a more real world of essential life."

As the main effort of the Asian artists was to seize the inherent life of the subjects they depicted, they purposely ignored not only the accidental



qualities (as is done by the Western æsthetes and better painters), but almost their whole surroundings, so dear to the Europeans, who are fond of crowding their pictures with superfluous details which mar the pure beauty of a painting. By obliterating secondary motives in their pictures, by isolating the painted subjects, which they represent in large although finely proportioned space, the Chinamen will give to a bird, to a tree, to a flower, to a figure, a meaning of monumental grandeur, loftiness of spirit, irresistible elegance, and charming suggestion, hinting in the meanwhile at the infinity of life.

However, the greatest praise one can bestow on Chinese art is this, that throughout the whole course of its history one does not find the grossly erroneous notion, so popular with us, that the imitation of nature is essential in art; on the contrary, they look contemptuously on such an idea as a despicable and passing heresy. This is comprehensible, at least, to a limited number of Western æsthetes, who, however, fail to understand why all the Asian artists paint in the same manner the same subjects, no matter how original the artist. This is regarded by us as a serious drawback to Eastern art, and is advanced as a weighty argument through which we try to prove that the Western artists are superior on account of the individual treatment of the subjects they paint, and that the Eastern painters are incapable of originality or progress. Such a way of looking on Eastern art is but superficial. If the water, let us say, is painted in the same way throughout Asian art, this is done consciously; for

the Eastern painters, being true to their purpose of expressing always the essential character and genius of the element, leaving out the accidental changes produced by different light and varying atmosphere, represent the essence of the waves in their perpetual rhythm and the curves by which they are formed. The limits given to this study do not allow reference to several other traditional subjects painted in the same conventional, or rather symbolic, manner, each artist adding that of his individuality, which decides the value of his work. Suffice to say that this symbolic way of painting might be characterized as the expression of spiritual serenity—Goethe's *Heiterkeit*—floating above the turbulent life of the world.

Still another difference between Eastern and Western art is this, that in pictures representing many figures, the European artists set them in such a manner that they all tend to one central point; unity being one of the required elements of a work of art, this convergence is an imperative necessity. In Eastern paintings with crowded figures, this unity seems not to exist—at least, it is not as much accentuated as it is in the compositions of the Western masters. However, this is only apparent or rather less formal, for the unity in a work of Asian art is expressed by the mutual relation of figures and even of objects.

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It is certain that to China, and not to India, the Asian people have to look, not only for the most fragrant flowers of painting, but for a starting-

point, a foundation, and even for an ideal and pattern.

Through a legend we learn that the art of China goes as far back as 4,500 years, when the Chinamen were ruled by the Yellow Emperor, from whose reign date the arts and crafts of mankind; that there lived then two inspired sages: Is'any Chieh, the inventor of writing, and Shih Huang, who originated drawing. The earliest mention of colour dates from the reign of the Emperor Shun, about 500 years later. According to *Shun Ching*—"Book of History"—His Majesty commanded that the twelve symbols of power, which had been handed down from the most remote ages, should be embroidered, or painted, in the five colours on his sacrificial robes.\* Chinese writers report that the first artist was a younger sister of the Emperor Shin, named Lei. This fact made a Chinese *littérateur* exclaim, "Alas! that this divine art should have been started by a woman!" Already in 220 B.C. Chinese art attained such a degree of perfection that it was said of an artist of the name of Lieh Yü, that he painted phoenixes and dragons without pupils in their eyes lest they should fly away; and when once, at the Emperor's command, he put the pupils into a dragon's eyes, the creature disappeared from the wall, leaving behind only a cloud of smoke.

The first Chinese dynasty, that of Han, existed from 2700 B.C. to 200 A.D., and during that period

\* *An Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*, by Herbert A. Giles. Published by Messrs. Kelly, of Walsh, Shanghai, 1910.

the names of fifteen artists are recorded in the history of China. Then follows an era called "The three kingdoms," during which there were six dynasties, from 200 to 600 A.D. The Wei dynasty 220-265 A.D., furnished only four painters, while that of the Chin, 265-420, produced twenty-two artists whose names have been handed down. Amongst those was Wang Hsi-chich, 321-379 A.D., China's greatest calligraphist, whose writing was "light as floating clouds, vigorous as a startled dragon."

We see then—although we cannot judge the artistic value of the pictures of this period, for we do not know of any till we come to the fourth century—that there was an active and vigorous artistic movement in China; for we find names of artists, art criticism, and artistic allusions. The Chinese literature refers so often to art that we are able to form a clear idea as to what kind of art flourished then! The favourite subjects were the phoenix, dragon, and lion; pictures of animals were common, and portrait-painting was prevalent. This might be explained by the influence of Confucius, for according to him filial piety was the foremost virtue, and the portraits of those who were remarkable, either for their deeds or accomplishments, had an ennobling influence over those who look at them. Although he was a stern moralist, he said, "Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the public arts." \*

It is plain that the art that was capable of producing such a masterpiece as is the *makimono*

\* *Confucian Analecta*, Book VII, Chapter VI.

painted by Ku K'ai-chih, entitled "Admonitions of the Instructress in the Palace," the greatest art treasure of the whole collection of the British Museum, and it would not be an exaggeration to say, of the world, was not in its infancy. This unsurpassable masterpiece was painted between 364 and 405 A.D., and it represents nine scenes, each illustrating a precept or example of conduct held up for admiration by the instructress of the ladies of the Chinese Court. It is the oldest document of Asian art in existence—at least, known to Western students; what is more, it is the only one known to exist between the fourth and eighth centuries. There is nothing clumsy or awkward—common characteristics of primitive art—about the workmanship of this precious roll of paintings. On the contrary, the art of Ku K'ai-chih is so consummate that it is impossible to notice even the slightest effort; and the Chinese writer T'ang Hon was justified when he said in his *Hau chien*, that "Ku K'ai-chih painted his pictures as a spring silkworm spins silk. At first sight his pictures seem flat, but a close inspection shows that the six canons are all observed. His ideas are like clouds floating in space, or a stream hurrying along—perfectly natural." The Chinese critic was right in praising the spontaneity and assurance of the brushwork of the great Asian artist.

Yes, six canons, but especially the first concerning rhythm, were well observed in this peerless work of art, for in regard to beauty of sweeping yet sensitive, rhythmical and precise line, few paintings—if any—in the world approach this. The painter

mastered his materials to perfection, and his delight overflowed in the exquisite modulations of the brush line with which the streaming draperies are caligraphed. The composition of the groups is not inferior to the execution, especially in the sixth scene, called "Harmonious life," illustrating the following passage, written by the lady Pan Chao, who lived and wrote in the first century A.D. thus: "To utter a word seems an insignificant thing; but on it depends honour or shame. Think not to hide your thoughts; the heavenly mirror has no need of visible forms. Say not that you have made no noise; the Divine Ear has no need of sound. . ." While in the "Toilet-scene," illustrating the line: "All can adorn their faces, none can adorn her heart," one notices a refined simplicity in the surroundings and accessories. The women depicted by Ku K'ai-chih are slender and exquisitely elegant in their flowing robes, ornamented with streaming ribbons.

The style of the paintings, dresses, and types of men and women indicates that the roll was executed by a fourth-century master. Then there is an intrinsic proof of its authenticity, for the landscape which is painted in one of the scenes is executed in the same manner as was described by Chang Yen-Yuan, a Chinese art critic of the eighth century. This writer saw some pictures painted by Ku K'ai-chih, and in his *Famous Painters of Different Dynasties*, he said that his mountains were drawn stiffly, "like hairpins and combs," and that it was his wont to paint the figures larger than the mountains. It is exactly in that

manner that the mountain is executed on the roll in the British Museum : there is no sense of proportion between a man shooting with a cross-bow and the landscape.

Ku K'ai-chih's name appeared in the history of China in 364 A.D. in the following manner. A Buddhist monastery was appealing to the public for funds to build a church, and the artist promised one million in *cash*. When the monks pressed him for the money, he asked to be allowed to closet himself in one of their rooms ; they granted his request, and in a few days he executed on a wall of the chamber such a wonderful figure of the Buddhist saint Vimalakirti that the people came in enormous crowds to see the masterpiece, and soon one million in cash was deposited by the pious pilgrims. He was a whimsical mind, and it was said of him that he was supreme in painting, poetry, and foolishness. Like all great Chinese painters he excelled in all kinds of pictures, but he was most renowned for his portraits, because of their deep spirituality and expression, and "as expression" —says a Chinese critic—"is of an occult nature beyond anything which can be learned, of all painters I place Ku K'ai-chih first." Notwithstanding his pre-eminence in portraiture, he complains of the difficulties of this branch of pictorial art when he says : "In painting, the most troublesome subject is man. . . . Painting the face of a pretty young girl is like carving a portrait in silver. There may be great elaboration, but no likeness will be forthcoming. It is better to put the elaboration into the young lady's clothes, and trust to a touch

here and a stroke there to bring out her beauty as it really is."

At the end of this priceless roll there is an inscription made by the great Emperor Ch'ien Lung, 1710-99: "At an odd moment in summer I came across Ku K'ai-chih's picture, 'Admonitions of the Female Historian,' and under its influence I sketched in ink a spray of epidendrum, as an expression of sympathy with its profound and mysterious purport. Only one who had himself reached Samadhi \* could attain to such a standard as this. The picture has not lost its freshness—an achievement not to be surpassed by the after born. Of the painter's four works, this is the best."

This is a literary monument worthy of the great master !

Ku K'ai-chih's picture is of great consequence, not only on account of its inimitable beauty, but also as a document of importance through which two obscure questions are made clear. It proves that Chinese art was not influenced by Greece, for in that priceless *makimono*, there is not a vestige of Greek art. It demonstrates also that Chinese art was already great, when some Indian elements were added to it. The argument in favour of this assertion rests on these facts, that the oldest Indian pictorial document, the Ajantû frescoes, were executed two centuries after Ku K'ai-chih's death, and that notwithstanding those two centuries, they look but very primitive if compared with the consummate Chinese masterpiece. The refined and subdued colouring, the elegant and artistic rhythm, the fine

\* The highest pitch of abstract ecstatic meditation.



and nervous power of Ku K'ai-chih's picture prove convincingly that the achievement of Chinese art was far superior to that of India.

There is not one picture painted between the fourth and eighth centuries in existence—except perhaps somewhere in China—although history has on its roll a great many artists.

During this long period two symbolic conceptions were constantly reproduced; these were the Tiger and the Dragon—both emblems of power. The Dragon was the genius of water, producing mists and clouds; he represented also the power of the spirit of the infinite, of change. The Tiger was the genius of the mountains, whose roaring is heard in the wind; he represents the power of material forces. The Dragon is a product of the lurid Chinese imagination, capable of giving horrible shapes to those strange frights which are found at the bottom of the fancy of all mankind. The Tiger-Dragon pictures portrayed the ceaseless conflict of material forces with spiritual—the Infinite.

When the most famous Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hsien, returned from India at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Buddhism followed him, and had a great influence on Chinese art, bringing into it new motives and elements, stimulating ideals and religious imagery. The ideas of Confucius, representing the national orthodoxy and well-ordered society, interpreted by pedantry, which is a great drawback to the Chinese mind, made everything so stiff that a reaction against convention was necessary. This was accomplished by the doctrine of Lao Tzū, the

preacher of individual freedom in opposition to Confucian social obedience and slavery. Towards the fifth century Laoism, or Taoism, took a strong hold on those Chinese who embraced Buddhism, and brought a new element into life, literature, and art. Taoism has much in common with our Romanticism; one of its subjects was the Rishi or Wizards of the mountains, human beings eating only fruits and drinking only dew, and enjoying immortality; they personified hair-brained youth and everlasting joy, riding through the air on birds and animals. Rishi have a certain likeness with Buddhist Arhats, who also were supposed to live in the mountains, and personified intellectual might, combined with forms of grandeur; their sole occupation was deep meditation, whereby they remind one of Christian hermits. Both Arhats and Rishi were favourite subjects with the Chinese painters, and inspired true masterpieces.

The introduction of Buddhism brought into Chinese art numberless deities, not only various personifications of Buddha and Budhisattva, but hundreds of other forms, borrowed from Indian mythology, from which was also derived grotesqueness; the refined Chinamen had many difficulties before they succeeded in changing those not very artistic conceptions and in subduing them to a harmonious and elegant rhythm.

Perhaps the best acquisitions that Chinese art gained from Buddhism are the sublime personifications of Mercy, Tenderness, and Love; their figures slightly inclined forward, their broad foreheads, their regular and calm features, noble in their deep

contemplation, make them worthy to be placed side by side with the ecstatic creations of the masters of the West.

Such were the state and tendency of Chinese art, when, in 618, the era of the T'ang dynasty opened; it lasted until 905, and was not only the period of China's greatest political power, but also of her most vigorous, although not most perfect art, and of important poetry. The efforts of the artists of this period were to develop and to perfect the art of line—which was the ordinary Asiatic style—to make it express not only the forms of reality but also the much-desired rhythmical beauty. This union of painting with caligraphy was best effected by Wu Tao-Tzŭ, who is one of the most celebrated names in the history of Chinese art. He was astonishing for his extraordinary facility and wonderful imagination, which enabled him to paint no fewer than three hundred frescoes, full of a fancy so brilliant that it was said that his picture representing the Buddhist Purgatory frightened the populace and arrested their sinful propensities. The most important, nay, surprising specimen of his work was the "Nirvana of Buddha," a piece crowded with figures and showing a tremendous power of conception combined with a freedom and grandeur which can be found in no other works of Asian art. The original of this picture has perished, but a talented Japanese artist of the thirteenth century made a copy of it, with some variation, now in the British Museum, and this allows us to admire the masterly conception of this magnificent creation of Eastern art.

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In 907 the T'ang dynasty succumbed to its destiny, and before the rise of the Sung house, which lasted from 960 to 1280, five unimportant dynasties emerged only soon to disappear. The Sung period of three hundred years is the one most splendid for art, which then reached its zenith, in spite of the dwindling power of the Empire.

The love of Nature introduced by Lao Tzŭ, and developed by the Zen sect—the Conversationalists—into a doctrine of contemplation of the world, became the dominating thought of the age. This love of Nature, being of the essence of romance, prompted Chinese artists and poets not only to discuss the Abstract and Pure, the subtle beauties of Nature, but also to seek after them by leaving the commonplace life of towns for the country, in solitary Buddhist monasteries, when they could assuage their ardent craving for quiet and delicate sensations.

The Zen doctrine inspired the art of the Sung period, not only by developing a kind of religious worship of Nature, and, by a natural consequence, its representation, but also by cultivating that refined sentiment of suggestion of mind to mind through which the Asian painters attained such heights, and produced such masterpieces that it is impossible to surpass them. Nothing mattered to them but the artist's mood or emotion ; his soul was revealed and illuminated in the life of things ; the reality was in his own soul, and he could only suggest and never fully express it. According to their notion, a painter expresses far more by a suggestion, by depicting only a branch of a tree,

a flower, a bird, than he could do by filling his picture with many subjects. Kuo Hsi, one of the greatest of Chinese landscape painters, in whose works one finds a passionate feeling for Nature, said that "a painter must, above all things, seize essentials, and discard the trivial." One may rightly suppose that Toenmei's poems on the "purity of the dew-drooping chrysanthemum, the delicate grace of the swaying bamboo, the unconscious fragrance of plum-flowers floating on twilight water, the green serenity of the pine, whispering its silent woes to the wind, and the divine narcissus, hiding its noble soul in deep ravines, or seeking for spring in a glimpse of heaven," inspired many a painter of that period with those charmingly simple pictures, the fragrance of which may be felt but never described.

The characteristics of this period are a supreme refinement and most exquisite finish, the brush-line temperate and quiet, yet sensitive and alive; the space perfectly balanced; the colouring noble and harmonious, although subordinate to form and very often eliminated. The life of Nature and of all non-human things is regarded in itself; its character contemplated, and its beauty cherished for its own sake, not for its use and service in the life of man.

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The over-refined Sungs could not withstand the pressing power of the barbarous Mongols, and they were succeeded by the Yüan dynasty, which ruled over China from 1280 to 1368. However, the

civilizing power of the Chinese was so strong that the Mongols soon became imbued with it, and Kublai Khan, having elevated Peking to the dignity of his capital, fostered literature and art, and so continued the glorious Sung period.

An interesting fact connected with the Yüan dynasty is that Buddhism was introduced into Tibet, where it took the name of Lamanism. Naturally the religion was followed by art, which found expression in religious pictures. The original faith of Tibet consisted of the adoration of a great number of devilish gods, which, in accordance with the Buddhist spirit of tolerance, were introduced into the religious system of the Enlightened One. The gloom of the Tibetan religion influenced its art, and mixed the monstrous with the sublime, the lurid side dominating. The serenity of the Buddhist ideals were unable to prevail over infernal goddesses, and fire-wreathed fiends drinking from skulls. Notwithstanding graceful individual figures, notwithstanding rich and glowing colour and rhythmical drawing, the general characteristic of Tibetan art is a burning gloom, obscene and terrible.

The barbarous Mongols, led by the terrible Genghis Khan, conquered Persia, and this established communication between Eastern and Western Asia, which was still more quickened at the end of the fourteenth century, when Tamerlane effected the second conquest. When the slaughter was over, and the havoc superseded by peace, a prosperous art school was founded at Samarcand, which excelled in miniatures. The characteristics of old Persian art are the caligraphic rhythmical beauty,

as with the Chinese manner of painting, and an almost total absence of colour, which is restricted to a few touches of blue and red. Subsequently it adopted an exquisite colouring, while its design grew feeble, languid, and uncertain, due to restricted creative ideas and slavish repetition; on the other hand, it is free from academical mannerism.

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The Mongols were expelled from China in 1368; the Ming dynasty sat on the throne of the Dragon until 1644. In the first part of this period art continued the tradition of the house of Sung, was flourishing and important, notwithstanding that Chinese artists forsook the loftiness of the eleventh and twelfth centuries for an external magnificence, and abandoned the simple beauty of monochrome for sensuous colouring. The art of the Ming period is well represented in the British Museum by two pictures of "Wild Geese, Lotuses, and Rushes," painted by Lion Liang, which may be described as very clever for their strength of brushwork and assurance of design; but one cannot help noticing a decline of subtlety and of that fine modulation which distinguished the Sung artists.

The best example, perhaps, of the genius of this period is the picture called "The Earthly Paradise," which, although it is signed with the name of Ch'ien Chun-chu, an artist who was famous during the reign of the Yüan house, could have hardly been painted earlier than in the middle of the Ming dynasty period.\* The subject seems to

\* *Guide to an exhibition of Chinese and Japanese Paintings* in the Print and Drawing Gallery, British Museum.

be the arrival of beatified beings in the Earthly Paradise of the West. The painting, with its floating figures, blossoms dropping through the air, its sense of ethereal gaiety, and its richness and rarity of colour, is full of the romance of Taoist conception. It is a charming idyll, but certainly it has nothing of the sublime.

Wên Cheng-ming was the greatest landscape painter of the Ming period, and his pictures remind one of the best eighth-century masters, with this comment, however, that the intimate communion with Nature of the Sung masters is exchanged for a romantic element.

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The year 1644 witnessed the downfall of the house of Ming, which was followed by that of Ch'ing, the last dynasty. Pedantry, which began to show its destructive power on literature and art during the Ming period, caused a decadence under the Manchu Tartars. The Chinese of this epoch were satisfied with a proud contemplation of the glorious past, contributing nothing that could originate a new renaissance in the Celestial Empire. Neither was there a refreshing stream coming from without, as was Buddhism in former ages. The names of painters recorded by Chang Keng\* are very numerous—202 artists, 15 Buddhist priests, and 22 women—but, unfortunately, they were only more or less imitators and copyists of the old masters. Perhaps the most remarkable amongst the painters of the Ching period was Huang han,

\* *Knoch'ao hua cheng lu*, published in 1739.



of whom a Chinese critic said that he painted flowers and birds with "the extreme of life motion"; according to Sie Ho's "Six Canons," this is the highest praise that could be bestowed on an artist. The Chinese expression "life's motion" is as untranslatable as is the German word *Stimmung*; it is next to impossible to define it, either. It does not mean motion pure and simple, for the Chinese would say even of a rock that it is painted with "life's motion," if the picture or drawing fulfilled certain æsthetic conditions, the importance of which is comprehensible only to their mind.

A Chinese art critic, named Chang Keng, describes what an unfortunate result was obtained by Chinese artists who wished to imitate the European manner of painting. "He depicted," says the Chinese *littérateur* of a European artist, "a woman holding up a little child, declaring that this last was a representation of God. The projection and colouring of these were very fascinating; and the artist himself maintained that the Chinese could only paint flat surfaces, consequently there was no projection or depression—relief—on their pictures. 'We, in our country,' he said, 'paint both the light and the dark, so that the result shows projection and depression. A man's full face is light, and the side parts are dark. If the side parts are coloured dark in a picture the face will appear in relief.' Chiao acquired this art, and modified his style accordingly, but the result was not refined or convincing. Lovers of antiquity would do well not to adopt this method."

This judicious advice, however, was not followed ; and some Chinese artists took a fancy to European naturalism, with the result that modern Chinese art is in decay, especially with those artists who do not even follow their great old masters, if they are incapable of creative work.

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A few enlightening precepts furnished by the exhibition of Chinese art may be formulated in the following manner. Without presuming to decide whether Western art is superior to that of the East, or vice versa, one may rightly affirm that Asian art is complete in itself, that it impresses us as a whole by its cohesion, solidarity, order, and harmony, that it is worthy of our most serious consideration and intense study, for it shows almost throughout its whole course the complete victory of the spirit over the matter ; and that Chinese artists enriched the lives of their countrymen by creating beautiful and even sublime masterpieces, which is the purpose of every art.

Then the Chinese pictures demonstrate that muddy hues produced by mixing of colours should be eschewed in favour of clean tints which should be harmonized by the creative power of the artist. Further, they prove convincingly that the purpose of art is not the beautifying of Nature according to commonplace patterns, nor her exact photographic reproduction, but that everything should be decided by the free individuality of an artist for whom Nature is only material for creative purposes. Again, that too eager materialistic search for minute

optical illusions, and too heavy, material modelling are not necessary, and are even detrimental, for lines and spots of colour are sufficient. Again, neither too regular composition, nor a foolish lack of it causes a painting to be a masterpiece; too much symmetry being contrasted successfully with graceful and careless fancifulness, while the absence of regularity is opposed by the principle of decorative inventiveness. Again, it is not necessary to paint big canvasses, for some of the Chinese masterpieces, full of depth and breadth, are painted on relatively small pieces or rolls of silk. They teach us also the secret of bringing out from numberless accidental details only the essence of things, and of rendering it by the most necessary means. Then they make it evident that an artist should not strive to express everything; that to the fancy of the spectator should be left the freedom of completing, through feeling, the suggested motive, ascertaining in this manner the only principle of beauty which can be applied everywhere.

It would be impossible to close this study by a more appropriate utterance than is this of the great æsthete, Laurence Binyon, when he said: "Surely it is not least by her painting and her literature that China will live for the world!"



# **THE PICTORIAL ART OF JAPAN**



## THE PICTORIAL ART OF JAPAN

NOTWITHSTANDING the efforts made by some archæologists \* to prove that the Ainos, the aborigines of Japan, were not deficient in the useful arts, one would be quite safe in maintaining that art was brought into the Isles of Nippon by the Yamato race, whom we call Japanese. Their natural sensibility to the beauty of Nature was intensified and fostered by the extraordinary beauty of their islands, which fully justifies Hippolite Taine's theory.

Although the mightiest mountains in the world divide the Asiatic continent, and Japan is isolated from it by the sea, Asia is all one in its boundless love for the Universal and the Ultimate. This unity of Asia is the cause that the principal canon of Japanese, as of Chinese, art is "the life-movement of the Spirit through the Rhythm of Things." Line and line-composition have always been not only the primitive but the universal Asian method. However, one must not think that the excellence of Japanese pictorial art lies merely in contours and outlines; for although the Japanese artists added the beauty of dark and light, they did not forget that their purpose was artistic and not scientific, and therefore, while they contributed the notion of

\* *The Pictorial Arts of Japan*, by William Anderson. *Japan, its History, Arts, and Literature*, by Captain F. Brinkley.

composing in colours, the whole philosophy of their art was comprised in the saying: "A picture is a voiceless poem; a poem is a picture with a voice." Japanese art has also another point in common with that of China, namely, a love of Nature and of Freedom, the result of the introduction of Laoïsm or Taoïsm.

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Albeit the Yamato race were possessed of artistic taste and ability, their æsthetic energy was aroused and developed by the wealth of Chinese artistic culture when the matured arts of the Hâng dynasty were introduced into Japan. The numerous inscriptions in Chinese found in Japan attest that the art education of the Japanese was well advanced before the age of Buddhism, and produced the grand art of the Asuka period. The history of art in Japan, before the introduction of Buddhism, shows that her intercourse with the Asian continent goes as far back as 147 B.C. According to an ancient writing called *The Catalogue of Families*, pictorial art in Japan began in the reign of the Emperor Yuriaku, 457-479 A.D., when a Chinese painter named Nanriū, or Shinki, came over to Japan. The Japanese had a Ministry of Fine-Arts as early as the fifth century.

When in the sixth century A.D. the teaching of Buddha was accepted in Japan, the joy inspired by the idea of union with the Absolute gave rise to a great love of the beauty and significance of things. The Japanese followed the enthusiastic Northern Buddhists, who painted the whole world with gods, and mingled sensuously decorative effects



with the calligraphic dexterity of primitive art. This was done by the medium of a gorgeous but studied play of gold and lively colours, which, naturally, pleased the untrained taste of the populace. But as in the meantime the bold sweeping stroke of brush, understood and appreciated by the educated few, was not neglected, the higher taste of the aristocracy of learning was not offended, and the illumination was received with approval.

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The main characteristic of the first epoch of Japanese art, called the Asuka period (550-700), was abstract idealism, and the first Japanese picture was a portrait of the Prince Wumayado, who stands out in the history of Japan as St. Louis does in that of France, and Alfred the Great in the history of England. He is worshipped to this day as the patron of the arts; his portrait, notwithstanding its stiffness of pose—characteristic of primitive works—is of great artistic consequence. In Chiuguji there is a tapestry representing the Kingdom of Infinite Bliss, which, together with the lacquer decorations of a shrine belonging to the Empress Suiko, gives an adequate idea of the drawing and colouring of the first Japanese painters.

When at the beginning of the eighth century the capital of Japan was removed from Asuka to Nara, a great era in Japanese history and art began. It was an age of grandeur and of liberalism, which resounded in the songs of Hitomaru, Ritaihaku, Kalidasa, Banabhatta, and Jain Ravikirti. Nara

soon became rich, splendid and refined ; the only occupations of the Court and nobility were festivals, dancing, music, poetry, flower fêtes, and art. The elaborate ceremoniousness of the Buddhist religion imparted to the upper class a love of rich clothes, of gorgeous pomp, and of courteous manners. In respect of art, it was an epoch of calmness, resulting in a harmony of spirit and matter, very much like that of Greek classicism. The Japanese artists succeeded not only in rendering the abstract beauty of the Indian ideal, but also in adding to it a completeness and delicacy that made the Japanese art of the Nara period perfectly expressive of Asian thought.

The history has handed down a great many names of these artists, whose works, unfortunately, have perished, with the exception of the frescoes preserved in the temple of Horinji ; and these are of high consequence, not only on account of their grand, strongly-outlined figures, but also because through them we learn that the Japanese artistic genius was able to improve on wall-paintings of the Ajanta Caves in India, so celebrated in Asian art. Another relic of this period, "The Beauties under the Trees"—a line-painting representing single figures of women under trees, and a landscape in the background—possesses much of the flexibility of Japanese genius expressed in graciousness and suavity.

Still another painting of the same period, "Buddhist Angel," has great sweetness and beauty. The angel, bearing the jewel of life, is a charming figure, without a vestige of human grossness of

any kind ; it is free from fear, struggle, and hate ; an enlightened spirit floating above everything that is low, and near Nirvana, that is to say, the final bliss, which is to be obtained when one is absorbed by the eternal Oneness. That angel, moving above the sufferings, strifes, and longings of men, full of divine compassion and tenderness, is one of the most enchanting, most gracious creations of Buddhism, "revealing that side of infinite tenderness and "sense of brotherhood in all life, which constitutes that religion's most universal appeal."\*

In regard to colouring, the pictures of the Nara period are exquisite in their tones of subdued richness, the landscapes being different from the Chinese both in execution and spirit.

In 794 A.D. the capital of Japan was again removed, this time to Heian or Kyoto, and then began the third epoch, which lasted until about 900 A.D.

The ideas of the former or Nara period, the harmony between mind and matter, and the realization of the Supreme Spirit in concrete form, now became more developed, and grew stronger. Nature and art were looked upon in a new light, for in every object was to be found the Impersonal-Universal. Kukai's twelve *devas*, preserved in Saidaji, and the Kiokaimandara of Senjuin, are the best specimens of the pictorial art of the Heian period, the characteristic of which is virility. Heian art is lacking in detachment and in the spontaneity of great idealism, but it possesses assurance, vitality, and vigour, and it is concrete.

\* *Painting in the Far East*, by Laurence Binyon.

The Japanese mind having completed the contemplation of the Indian ideal, and absorbed what was best in Chinese and Indian wisdom, decided to develop its own ideals and forms in politics, government, life, literature, and art; and for this purpose intercourse between the Continent and the lovely isles was deliberately stopped. This development of Japanese culture and art may be termed national, and it is known under the name of the Fujiwara period, 898-1200 A.D.

The most peculiar characteristic of this epoch was not only the isolation of the country and the realization of its separate purpose, but also the ascendancy of woman to an extent unknown in any other land. This feminine sway was manifested in the first place by the appearance of important books written by women, amongst whom stands out Murasa Ki Shikibu, the authoress of the great romance of *Genji*, which was read and illustrated by every generation. The sarcastic pen of another woman named Seishonagon anticipated Mme. Scudery's witticisms by seven hundred years; while Komachi, in her glory, was the envy of the court at which she was the frailest, the loveliest, the wittiest of the women, and the greatest poetess. The prevalence of the eternal feminine was so strong in Japan during the Fujiwara period, that the nobility urged, as a reason for their womanish softness, that the true man was a combination of man and woman; they went so far as to imitate women in their clothes, and in making up their faces. They left all their useful duties to the inferior classes, and considered that burning

incense, drawing on fans, hawking, playing football, writing verses, planning palaces, building monasteries, and patronizing artists, were the only functions worthy of their caste. Intoxicated with love, men and women danced, sang of Amida, and organized masquerades and fêtes in which angels were represented seated on the lotus, and descending from Heaven to carry away departing souls.

Such a state of affairs could not last for ever ; the lower orders rose against their enfeebled superiors, unmasked the powerlessness of the Fujiwara court, and set up the barons, amongst whom the two martial families of the Minamatos and of the Tairas were the most powerful. An epic battle was fought at Suma and Shioya, in which a Minamoto defeated his rival Taira, and the candidate to the Imperial throne.

While morals were lax, severe canons ruled manners, accomplishments, and art. The high standard of art may be seen in the paintings of Buddhi-Sattvas, for they are images of infinite tenderness, and express spiritual serenity in such a supreme manner that to contemplate them is to be strangely moved, yet wonderfully appeased. Usually the forms of the stern or benignant Buddi-Sattvas were painted on a dark background, surrounded by a delicate radiance which made them look like a presence from the unknown. The forms are produced by the medium of flowing lines ; they were attired in harmoniously streaming draperies, that seem to be animated with life, while the colouring "discloses itself as a part of

the calmly glowing life within, veined with fine lines of gold, not as something applied from without." \* Another elevated conception of this art was Amida-Buddha, whose form, executed with mysterious and undulating harmonies, acts on one like a glow of glorious and solemn music. Amida is represented as surrounded by a fluctuating multitude of heavenly beings, gleaming with gold behind him ; he gazes down upon the world kindly and graciously, while sweet flowers stream down, and the inmates of Heaven play all kinds of musical instruments.

Amongst the painters of this period Kanaoka is the most remarkable—perhaps he is the greatest in the history of Japanese art. This may be inferred from his portrait of the Prince Shotoku, a masterpiece worthy of the greatest genius, on account of its noble simplicity, solemn but glowing colouring, and surpassing grandeur of design. Kanaoka was the founder of the Kosé School, which was influenced by his descendants from the ninth to the twelfth century. The British Museum possesses a masterpiece of the Kosé School, "Nirvana of Buddha," which is either based on the great conception of this subject by the Chinese painter Wu Tao-tzu, or copied from his picture, with certain Japanese variations. This picture is ascribed to Hiroka, Kanaoka's great-grandson, and after him the most talented painter of the Kosé line. This painting is remarkable for its grand, vigorous, and impassioned style, for the expressive force of its line-drawing, and for its harmony of colours.

\* Laurence Binyon, *lib. cit.*

Yéshiu Sozu's conception of Buddha's golden angelic figure, represented as rising between two hills, fills the canvas with supernatural peace ; it is supremely august, and must be counted amongst the few paintings of the world which are unsurpassable in their religious sentiment of bliss and exaltation. What a mighty artistic source is religious enthusiasm ! The greatest artists of the world, Phidias, Raphael, Fra Angelico, Leonardo da Vinci, Murillo—to mention but those—were inspired by religious sentiment in creating their sublimely serene masterpieces.

In the eleventh century Takuma Tamenji, who was much influenced by the Chinese masters of the Sung period, formed another school, an offshoot of that of Kosé, and this was followed by still another school of Kasuga Motomitsu. Those two schools were subsequently united into one by Tosa Tsunetaka, and from thus fusion came the Yamato or National School ; its works possess a matured style, which indicates that the Japanese artistic tendencies were now fully developed, their delicacy and voluptuous colouring being united with the virility of the Chinese style.

The paintings of the Fujiwara period are striking for their delicate lines, their gorgeous but refined colouring, and their predominating use of gold—very much as in the pictures of European mediæval artists ; they have impressive qualities of decision and order. It was a magnificent and rare art !

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After a long civil war, Yoritomo—one of the

greatest figures in the history of Japan, representing the family of the Minamatos—defeated the Tairas, and forced the Emperor to bestow on him the title of *Shogun*.<sup>\*</sup> This event ushered in yet another epoch of Japanese history, begun in 1186, and lasting till about 1400 A.D. This period is called Kamakura.

The Eastern barbarians, who lived in the trans-Hakone regions—not unlike the hordes of Goths in Europe—overthrew the too refined nobility of the artistic Fujiwaras, and on the ruins of aristocratic rule inaugurated an epoch of individualism and of hero-worship, combined with woman-worship. This period had much in common with our times of chivalry, of adventurous deeds for “the lady of my heart,” of religious enthusiasm displayed in building churches and monasteries, and of love of heroic romances. The romantic figure of the hero Yoshitsune—the brother of the formidable Yoritomo—reminds one of the Knight Pendragon; both are surrounded by the poetic mist so dear to our fancy. The whole of Japan was divided into feudal provinces, ruled by *daimyos*—barons—who were followed by their knights, called *samurai*, a class of sublime warriors who not only vied with each other in martial prowess, but also in courtesy, in self-conquest, in patience, in charity, in sweetness, in wisdom, and in devotion to women. “To suffer

<sup>\*</sup> *Shogun* is an abbreviation of *Seigi tai Shogun*, or Commander-in-Chief of the Armies that fight Barbarians. The long succession of military regents of Japan were called *Shoguns*, and of them the Minamatos reigned in Kamakura, the Ashikayas in Kyoto, and the Tokugawas in Tokio or Yedo.



and die for others" was the *samurai's* motto, as it was that of our immortal Crusaders, who ennobled the brutality of warfare by religious enthusiasm.

All these elements caused to blossom a literature of epic romances and of adventures. The art of the time lacked the idealized perfection of the Nara, and the refined delicacy of the Fujiwara periods, but it was remarkable for its virility of line. Amongst the painters, Nebuzane's pictures are noteworthy for the strangeness of their beauty, for delicacy of drawing, and for the simplicity of design; his art is a rare, new, and precious flower, quite different from that of China. In his "*Maki-mono of Court Life*," the poet-painter united virile expressiveness with conventional design, adding also resplendent but harmonious colours, such as have never been surpassed by any of the Japanese painters; the originality of his colouring consists of peculiar harmonies of orange and lapis lazuli, of black and gold, of fawn and opaque green. His portraits indicate a great intimacy with the sitters' characters, and are painted in light hues. The British Museum possesses good specimens of Kore-hisa's energetic brush, with which he renders the riot of speed and the fury of fear. The *makimono* owned by the Prince Tokugawa, the three battle-scenes of the Heji stories—one in the possession of the Emperor of Japan, one in the Boston Museum, and one in the Baron Iwasaki's collection—are excellent specimens of this art, for which there was neither too high nor too low a subject, because the canons of formalistic distinction were put aside

under the pressure of enthusiasm for the spirit of motion and for the individual consciousness. However, the most noteworthy characteristic of the Kamakura period is the absence of the influence of Chinese ideals.

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Takuji was the founder of the Ashikaga line of *shoguns*, hence the name given to the new era, that lasted from 1400 to 1600.

Under the Ashikaga sway the capital was removed from Kamakura to Kyoto, the interrupted communications with the Asian continent resumed, and Japan again became influenced by the spiritualism of India and the harmonic communism of Confucian thought, approaching in that way the romantic ideal from a subjective and idealistic point of view, which was quite different from that of the European races who sought it materialistically and objectively. The ideal of the Ashikaga epoch was due to the Zen sect, which influenced so much the *daimyos* and the *samurai* of the Kamakura times, when they wore priestly attire over their armour, shaved their heads, became militant monks, and were fond of contemplative retirement into monasteries. This ideal became now the fountain of an æsthetic inspiration, almost all Ashikaga painters having been either monks or priests. As thought became of the foremost importance, as opposed to form, there ensued a lively strife between the worldly senses and the spiritual life.

Beauty, said the Zenists, or the life of things, is always deeper hidden within than outwardly ex-

pressed; not to display, but to suggest is the spirit of infinity; perfection—like all maturity—fails to impress, because of its limitations. The Japanese artists took a great fancy to these ideas, and not only maintained in theory, but put into practice the view that “virility and activity were necessary to make a permanent impression, but that to leave it to the imagination to suggest the carrying out of an idea was essential to all forms of artistic expression, for thus was the spectator made one with the artist.”\* This was nothing new, for the same principle was accepted by the Chinese artists of the classical Sung period, under whose influence the Japanese painters now worked. This influence made them give up the representations of heroic actions, or ceremonious manners, depicted with sensuous, rich colouring and delicate curves, and prefer to paint flowers, birds, and landscapes, which they executed in monochrome, simple ink sketches, with a few bold, summary lines. They painted but very few subjects taken from legends or history, and even this was done under the guise of “types of contemplation or spiritual desire, and not as actors in any human drama.” Their art became almost entirely subjective.

This Japanese Renaissance began a little earlier than did the Italian; it was in full bloom towards the end of the fifteenth century. However, one cannot help thinking of this strange, almost simultaneous, but unconscious, coincidence that occurred in two distant and unconnected countries.

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\* *The Ideals of the East*, by Kakuzo Okokura.

The Ashikaga succumbed to the fate of the Fujiwara. Their time was one of war and terror caused by fighting the *daimyos* between themselves. The country was saved from anarchy by three great men: Ota-Nabunaga, who became dictator in 1573; Hideyoshi, who succeeded as *Shogun*, and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who overpowered the feudal barons, and founded a new capital in Yedo and a new line of *Shoguns*, who were abolished only by the revolution of 1868. Hideyoshi was the Napoleon of Japan, whose ambitious plans of conquering China only went as far as the devastation of Korea, because of his sudden death. But this invasion of Korea renewed intercourse with the Asian continent, and introduced to Japan the mature Ming art. The new Japanese nobility, sprung from robbers and pirates, could not understand the refinements of the Ashikaga period; their uncultured minds demanded a new art, not one of inner significance, but of the vulgar display of gorgeous colours and of a wealth of ornament that reminds one of the Prince Albert and Queen Victoria monuments. However, Japanese art, with its glorious past, could not succumb entirely to the vulgarity of the exigencies of the *nouveaux-riches*. The grandson of Kano Montonobu, the founder of the Kano school, which left such a strong tradition that it persists even to this day, by the name of Yeitoku, was a follower of the great art. Having been employed by the uncultured Hideyoshi to decorate his castle, he tried to satisfy his employer's craving for gorgeousness without derogating from the lofty traditions in which he had been trained by

his father. For this purpose, he was the first to introduce gold leaf for wall decorations and screens; the effect was magnificent, but Yeitoku's talent saved the art from falling into vulgarity, and in his hands it preserved its grandeur and importance.

When, in 1615, Tokugawa Ieyasu had stormed and taken the Osaku Castle—reported to be impregnable—and established the Tokugawa dynasty of *shoguns*, he made a strenuous effort to bring art back to the simple ideals of the Ashikaga times. In this he was seconded by his court painters: Tannyu, Nonabu, Yasunobu, and Tsunenobu, whose aim it was to imitate the simple refinement of Sesshu. But the vulgar spirit of the time was hostile, and frustrated this exalted endeavour to revive the severe culture of the Zenists. Seventeenth-century Japan outdistanced nineteenth-century America, and her imitator Europe, in substituting vulgar display for simplicity. After half a century of bloodshed, the Japanese vented their joy in wild revelry and almost childish playfulness in every form of unbridled pleasure. Yedo grew in size and wealth; industrial arts flourished, and gave rise to *genre* painting, for the artists who had risen from the common people delighted in painting the common scenes of life. The popular pressure was so strong that it destroyed the exquisite fabric of art and manners of the Ashikaga times, which had been produced by long tradition, diligent study, religious training, and solitary meditation. The new decorative, though not spiritual, art was triumphant.

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This artistic revolution was started by Hanabusa Itcho, who, in a mocking spirit, began to paint subjects from popular life, and gave impulse to the *Ukiyoyé*,\* or popular school, the true originator of which, however, was Matabei (1578-1650). Matabei's art is characterized by natural gesture and pose, combined with a keen sense of swiftly caught essentials, of simplicity of design, and expressive outlining of the figure. The four pictures by him, representing women and men playing games, show how originally he improved on the aristocratic Kano and Tosa, who also painted *genre* pictures occasionally, and produced great master-pieces like the Hikone screen, the most important work of the beginning of the *Ukiyoyé* period. Matabei's was such an original genius that he escaped the common fate of eclectics. "He is a power working in the life of art, in which is centred strength." Notwithstanding the revolutionary element introduced by him into Japanese art, the great tradition was still prolonged with some glory by Tsunenobu, and there remained the old school of Tosa in Kyoto, patronized by the Imperial house, while the Kano school was in favour with the *Shogun*.

The main characteristic of European decorative

\* *Ukiyoyé* is a term of Buddhist origin, and it means "pictures of the fleeting world," by which were designated all the appeals to the senses and the transitory elements of miserable mortality. Then it came to mean a recognized style, applied first to painters of scenes of daily life, and the artists of the school were known by that style even when they painted battles, or flowers, or landscapes.

art was symmetry ; in architecture, the decoration was ruled by the style of the building ; but we had a notion that it had nothing to do with the pictorial art, and that the imaginative element must be almost excluded from it. It was quite different in Japan, where, in the first place, the decorative element was rarely discarded from painting ; the Japanese artists would decorate a screen or a lacquer-box with a single flower, or with a flight of birds, or with a landscape. However, it must be borne in mind, that although they were able to do so without symmetry as a geometrical basis, their decorative art is not a happy caprice, a skilful irregularity ; on the contrary, it has the same principle of balance ; that is to say, science combined with taste, as European decorative art. To these the painter Korin added the mark of almost impertinent gaiety and free audacity ; his influence upon the applied arts was wonderful, not only in his own country, but in other lands as well ; but its most felicitous results were perhaps realized by the Copenhagen china decorators.

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The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were times of rivalry between two great cities : Yedo, or Tokyo, dominated by the *Shogun*, whose rigid authority extended even to art, and Kyoto, in which the Emperor resided in such poverty that he was obliged to sell his autographs. The *Shoguns'* official painters controlled the Kano schools, which worked under prescribed academic routine, and imitated, more or less, Tsunenobu and Tanyo. A

great number of the *Ukiyoyé* artists, having been despised by the feeble representatives of the glorious ancient art, and excluded from the life of the aristocracy, created for themselves a joyous artistic world, by illustrating the life of the populace, popular drama, theatrical celebrities, and the gay life of the Yoshivara beauties. Kyoto, being free from the discipline of the *Shogun*, which crushed all vigour and artistic creativeness, became a centre of literary and artistic life free from academic formulæ, where the rich *bourgeoisie* admired originality in the artists. This artistic life of Kyoto was open to two important influences: the first was the introduction from China of the later Ming and the earlier Manchu-Shin styles; the second was the study of European naturalism, brought to the Celestial Empire by Matteo Ricci, and from there to Japan through the instrumentality of Chinnan-ping, a Chinese painter who resided for a few years at Nagasaki. Besides this, Dutch engravings became known in Japan, and were copied with a brush (*sic*) by Maruyamo Okio. He was the representative artist of this period, for, having been well trained in the Kano school, he combined the new methods with his own, and was able to depict with a sure brush the various moods of Nature with delicacy and exquisite effect. Although he was capable of grand conceptions, yet his art does not move one as does that of the Ashikaga art. "There is a difference of import, of all that lies behind a work of art, in the recesses of thought, reverie, spiritual ardour, and desire."

There are many other painters of some merit,



but all, clever artists as they were, notwithstanding their skill and dexterity, failed to grasp—as their great predecessors had done—the essential character of their subject, and, therefore, to continue the traditions of a great national art.

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Although charmingly coloured wood-cuts and prints full of variety are so little thought of by Japanese writers that in their serious works on art they speak of them but slightly, this essay would not be complete if some space were not given to those specimens of Japanese artistic activity through the medium of which the art of Japan became known in Europe, rather than through the grand masterpieces kept in the temples and in the residences of the *daimyos*.

The first wood-cuts were brought to Europe in 1692, by Kaempfer, the historian of Japan; but they were really a Chinese product. Wood-cuts were originally used in Japan in making images of saints and gods. Moronobu employed them for popular picture books and single-sheet prints. His pupil, Kiyonobu, produced wonderful harmonies of only two colours, green and rose, besides the black outline. His prints representing actors, actresses, and the famous beauties of the Yoshiwara, were the most exquisite productions of the new art, and were sold in their thousands. Harunabu increased the number of blocks, and thus developed colour printing. He created a very seductive type of Japanese woman, representing Madame Chrysanthemum, as sweet, fragile, shy, and slender as the stem of an Easter lily, and sensitive to her finger tips.

Through Utamaro the *Ukiyoyé* reached its zenith. His art has not the charm of serene beauty, but he was a master in composition, in figure-drawing, and in expressiveness of line. He was a very gifted man, but lacked the superior qualities, and this lack made him inundate the world with prints loud in colour and of low artistic value, which caused the *Ukiyoyé* to be abominated. Hokusaj and Hiroshiye arrested for a while the decay of the *Ukiyoyé*. Hokusaj's life and work are the best known to us of all the Japanese artists ; it is enough, therefore, here to remind the reader that Hokusaj's chief merit overwhelms one only in his landscapes ; for with all his resources in composition and his knowledge of humanity, he did not succeed in leaving any classical figure work, that is to say, any work combining the essential powers of art in perfection. His application to labour surpassed even that gigantic worker Turner, with whom he rightly shares the fame of being the greatest landscape painter of the world. But we cannot say that his masterly depicting of Nature possesses the lofty contemplation, the aerial vista, or the majestic reverie that we find in the great landscape art of China ; he was not able to feel and express certain more elevated moods. When he was dying in 1849, his last words were : " Now my soul, a will-o'-the-wisp, can flit at ease over the summer fields." Hiroshiye was Hokusaj's worthy successor in landscape painting. His art, expressing single objects and their beauty, under the changes of light and atmosphere, is delightful, and his influence on

the art of Europe was the strongest and the widest of the Japanese artists. His followers, however, are very much mistaken in thinking that he had solved the great problem, and created the ideal decorative art, simply because he thinks of nothing but of enchanting harmonies of lines and colours, for the history of Japanese art teaches us that an ideal art possesses some more important elements than that.

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The last epoch of Japanese history opened in 1868, when the *shogunate* was abolished. The Meiji restoration glows with the fire of patriotism, and is characterized by a great national loyalty, as well as by two mighty forces, which are striving to master Japanese life—the Asian ideal and European culture. The first urges Japan to unite herself with Asiatic culture; the second attracts the inquisitive Japanese mind to the wonders of modern science. Both of them are equally conscious, but nobody would be presumptuous enough to predict what will be the result of this most interesting spiritual strife of a nation.

The dualistic character of the Meiji period has already produced its effect on art. On one side there is a strenuous effort to revive the literature and art of the times of the Tosas and the heroic Kamakura. On the other hand the influence of European realistic art has now a chance of success with Japanese artists, who are fascinated by the Western civilization, which confounds beauty with science and culture with industry. However, the

active individualism of the Meiji was not satisfied either with the orthodox conservatism, or the radical Europeanization of art; a group of earnest men made an effort to find an expression which would combine the ancient art of Japan with the knowledge and love of what is highest and best in the art of Europe, producing a new national art, the motto of which is "Life true to self." The result of this movement was the establishment by the Japanese Government of art schools in Ueno, Tokyo, and Yanaka, in which European masters teach side by side with Japanese. The principles prevailing in these schools may be summarized in this way: "Freedom is the greatest privilege of an artist, but his freedom should be understood in the sense of evolutionary self-development. Art is neither the real nor the ideal. Imitation, whether of Nature, of the old masters, or above all of self, is fatal to the realization of individuality, which rejoices always to play an original part, be it in tragedy or comedy, in the grand drama of life, of man, and of Nature."

When one reads such an elevated art programme one feels that there is no fear of the vulgarization of the exquisite old Japanese art, through the influence of the inferior elements of European civilization. We may be sure that where idealism and not imitation is given as a standard, art will develop in a sound direction, and will reach those heights where ideas, moods, and sentiments are the real, while facts are mere incidents. It is certain that under such conditions the students educated in those schools will understand that not the thing

as it was, but the infinite it suggested to him, is demanded of an artist. It is certain that, thanks to the æsthetic freedom that prevails in the modern art schools of Japan, both the range of subjects and the method of their expression, will grow wider, as is evident in the works of Kano Hogai and Hashimoto Gaho.

Thus Japanese art, notwithstanding the new and difficult conditions of the national life, from which art cannot be separated, the confusion of ideas, and the detrimental influence of industrialism, which took so strong a hold of the Japanese mind, is aspiring to the high regions of her grand old art, by the contemplation of which we learn that art is not an issue in itself, but a medium for the charm of life; that only in the conquest of spirit can art prevail. And we are delighted and elevated because, in beholding its immortal masterpieces, we feel that we are in communion with the Eternal.



**JEAN AUGUST INGRES**





## JEAN AUGUST INGRES

THE exhibition together of pictures of dead and contemporary artists is not an anachronism, for it furnishes an opportunity of making comparison and of seeing how much the living artists are indebted to those who preceded them. This lesson was evident when, in the Salon d'Automne, Ingres' work was compared with the pictures of living painters, for it was then demonstrated how closely he is connected with the art of to-day, so much so that one may look upon him as on one of the fathers of modern art. That spiritual relationship is probably due to the fact that there is much in common between the present epoch and that which preceded Ingres; as to-day there is a reaction against realism and impressionism, so in the same way there was formerly a reaction against mannerism, minuteness, and the effeminate charm of the eighteenth century; the exhausted art was standing on a crossway, waiting for a Renaissance.

When Ingres began to paint the change had already begun. The capricious and playful line had become stiff, and produced tedious, almost geometrical figures; the powdered beauties, boudoir scenes, charming marchionesses and elegant cavaliers, excursions to the Isle of Cythera, wigs and frocks à *panier*, had vanished. Instead of all that there appeared dull, dignified, morose figures, the

product of the new tendencies. Winckelman and Quatremère de Quincy had rediscovered classical beauty ; under their influence David in France, Raphael Mengs and Asmus Carsten in Germany turned to the stately Romano-Greek style to the Hellenic ideal as to a source of everything that is beautiful. The only authority on æsthetics was Winckelman's *Die Geshichte der Kunst des Altertums* ; the only recognized truth in painting and statuary was a canon like that of Polyclète ; pictures were composed according to the ideas of sculpture, and were like bas-reliefs. A type was conceived and deemed worthy of reproduction—a type of man, type of woman, type of horse ; there was, one might say, an algebra of shape and colour.

After that the direction of art changed and was divided into two streams : we have on the one hand a conflagration of colours, the war music of the Renaissance represented by Eugène Delacroix ; and on the other, a moderate classicism, at the head of which stood Ingres, who put his own soul into the antique dreams, made them bright with his own thought, and softened their stiffness by his personal observation.

Ingres brought to the common art-treasury the love of line, a subtle simplification of shape, concentration in drawing, a bewitching naïveté of vision. He says about his own creative power : “ I permit myself to think that I have opened a new road, adding to David's love of the ancient world my own love of Nature, together with a continual search after the tradition of the great Italian school and the cult of the works of Raphael.”

It seemed to Ingres that he was a follower of Sanzio ; he could not see how individual he remained, notwithstanding his enthusiasm for classical tradition. It is true that Ingres lived on reminiscences of and wandered in his thoughts round the Acropolis, where he sought his ideal of beauty ; it is true that he was fascinated by the master of Urbino ; but he did not feel himself that all the time the sharp melody of modernism resounded in him ; he did not know of how many different elements his vision was composed, or that this vision was modern and antique at the same time, though it reached to the Etruscan vases, the Byzantine and Gothic art, passing over Praxiteles, Phidias, and Scopas, over the "School of Athens" and the Madonnas.

Ingres' "Apotheosis of Homer," with its straight, almost geometrical lines and its rhythmical symmetry, has it not the Byzantine character? "Ulysses" and "Œdipus," have they not an affinity with the Etruscan vases in their preciseness of line, their flat modelling, and even their colour? While in his "Odalisques" and "Bathers" he has united a nature vibrating with life with a classical rapture of beauty. In all his pictures fine outlines, the sentiment of the beautiful, a modelling in the light, and a diffused illumination—not concentrated but strong—are characteristics of his genius, and give to his work an originality before unknown.

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Jean August Ingres' artistic activity began towards 1801, at which period we trace the influence of

his master David, his works being inspired by models, bas-reliefs, and cameos. Between 1801 and 1806 he painted "Philemon and Baucis," "The Wounded Venus," and the allegory, "Napoleon on the Kehl Bridge." Notwithstanding a lack of balance very natural in a beginner, one feels already the hand of a master, manifested not only in the figures, drawn in exact outlines, but in the logical, clear, and beautiful composition. The figures painted by Ingres, full of quietude and of great harmony, stand in their serious beauty near to the *statuæ iconicæ* which were erected by the Greek statuaries to the victors at the Olympic games.

From 1806 to 1820 Ingres was in Italy, where he became very intimate with Raphael's work, and then and there made a vow to admire him for ever, for he saw in him the only painter of the highest rank, one endowed with supernatural gifts, embracing the whole universe, looking into the depths of the human soul, encompassing the celestial regions of beauty. Under the influence of "the divine Sancio," as he called Raphael, Ingres produced several pictures, in which he strove to express the archaic dignity and charm of the painter of the "Transfiguration."

"Romulus" and "Virgil Reading the Æneid" are good samples of Ingres' inspiration at that period of his life, in which one can still see traces of David, of Guérin, and of Girodet; but his thought by and by plunged deeper, and although outline remained for him the quality of prime importance, there appeared an expression of life on his faces, which until then had been cold and impersonal.

What concentrated thought, for instance, there is in "Œdipus standing before the Sphinx"! What grief there is on the face of the sovereign to whom Virgil is reading from his poem the passage *Tu Marcellus eris!*

During his sojourn in Italy Ingres painted the picture called "Odalisques," a work beautiful with physical health and pagan repose, sensuous and chaste at the same time, graceful and delicate like flowers. The women represented in that picture are very different from the elegant ladies in *decolletés* frocks painted by Fragonard, Van Loo, and Boucher, or from David's Puritans wrapped up in the chlamys; they seem to be proud of their chaste nudity. Ingres gave them flexible and charming forms, but he clad them in the majesty of perfect beauty; he purified them from everything that might seem provocative. Even in such a composition as his "Turkish Bath" refined measure and good taste are so well preserved by Ingres that nobody could possibly be shocked at the group of beauties, who look like white lilies, pink roses, and golden anemones.

From 1820 to 1824 we find Ingres in Florence, from whence he sent to Paris the pictures "Louis XIII's Vows" and "The Entrance of Charles I into Paris," and at once became famous. From that time began those passionate discussions between the admirers of Ingres and those who preferred Delacroix, discussions difficult to understand even to-day, after so many years have passed over them and both the artists who fought for their respective ideals are dead. From that time also

began the sharp and unjust criticism of the romantic writers, who saw in Ingres rather an archæologist than an artist, an academician insensible to life and reality. We inherited that unjust appreciation, and until recently we have not understood Ingres ; we have overlooked his ardent love of the beautiful, a love full of passion and poetry which showed itself in a new vision. Baudelaire alone, always very sensitive and quick to understand anything unusually artistic, said, "*Ingres à l'idéal antique a ajouté les curiosités et les minuties de l'art moderne*" ; but that highly just and appreciative sentence seemed paradoxical to the classics and romantics, who failed to see anything in Ingres' work. They were so blind that they did not even notice that in his portraits Ingres has given a clear picture of the people of his epoch, and that he felt the pulse of the historical moment. The admirers of classicism did not comprehend this feature of Ingres' art, for it did not express the academic tradition ; they looked upon him as their last refuge in their fight with the romantics—a kind of tabernacle in which the Hellenic ideal was guarded from modern influence.

Ingres himself had so strange a conception of his own mission to preach the beauty of Raphael and the cult of the antique, that during his sojourn in Florence he had shut his eyes to the marvels of the Florentine school. He would have liked not to see, not to feel, not to admire either the solemn figures of Giotto or Cimabue, or the celestial visions of Fra Angelico or the supernatural creations of Buonarrotti. But as his artistic soul was too sensi-

tive to the charm of masterpieces, he could not pass them by with indifference, and it so happened that all those pictures, which he could not help seeing, were absorbed by him, in spite of himself. When, in 1824, he returned to Paris and painted "Homer" and "St. Symphorinus," his debt to Michael Angelo and Sebastien del Piombo was manifest.

In "Homer's Apotheosis" one can see that Ingres still maintained his personal creative will, notwithstanding his exalted respect for Raphael; there is nothing in Ingres' canvas that might remind one, in colour, style, or composition, of Sanzio's "School of Athens." How different is that singer of singers from all those I have seen painted, standing in the centre, solemn as Jupiter! He is almost a demigod; at his feet sit Odyssea and Iliade, a winged muse crowns him, and he is surrounded by a crowd of those who had derived from his immortal songs the sentiment of poetry.

"*Les hommes qui cultivent les lettres et les arts sont tous les enfants d'Homer*," said Ingres; consequently in the apotheosis of the great blind man he surrounded him with immortal bards, poets, and singers of all nations and all centuries. All those figures the painter distributed into square groups, and by this means he has produced an effect of severe, truly Olympian, beauty. "Homer's Apotheosis" is built like a logical puzzle, like a figure of oratory; everything in it—people, architecture, and background—goes to make up a monumental whole.

The artistic problem is quite different in "St.

Symphorinus," for which Ingres has found inspiration in a Gothic missal. Here the artist has demonstrated what tragic beauty he could produce, of what ability he was capable in modelling, in using light and shade; how he could understand character. This composition is very dramatic; a woeful tragedy is played in it without pathos, without theatrical recitation, a holy tragedy of the self-denial and self-sacrifice of a saint, who believed and was not afraid to die. The legend says that St. Symphorinus, brought up as a Christian, would not deny his creed and bow to the goddess Berencytia, for which he died in awful tortures, during which he was comforted by his mother.

During the period from 1824 to 1834 Ingres painted many portraits, which are not only masterpieces but also historical documents for the times of the July monarchy. One sees amongst them such types as that of the business man, "Dix-Huit-Cent-Trente," insolent because of his success and his wealth, and many Messieurs Prud'hommes and their respectable wives, with short busts, wearing mantillas à la *Paméla*. Among all those portraits the most remarkable is that of the director of the *Journal des Débats*, Bertin. His features are regular, but his head, set on large shoulders, is heavy; he sits in an armchair, his big hands resting on his enormous legs; he is massive and clumsy, like a log. The whole spirit of the *bourgeoisie* is expressed in that canvas; it is a synopsis of the epoch; an epic poem of its tendencies and its ideals.

During that time Ingres began his educational



efforts ; he opened a school of painting and tried to impart to his not very numerous pupils his theory, his artistic *credo* ; he believed himself to be an apostle, for he said, "*l'art n'est pas seulement une profession, c'est aussi un apostolat.*" The little, fat, impetuous man had, in fact, something of the sacerdotal in him ; enthusiasm, faith, and energy radiated from his proud and independent face. "He looks," Theodore de Banville said of him, "like a figure of a threatening Titan by Michael Angelo ; it seems that while creating him Buonarrotti began to work, as was his custom, without previously having taken any measurement, and starting from the head ; as the block of marble proved to be too short, the torso was made in proportion, but he was obliged to make the legs too short."

And how enthusiastically that Titan was sowing the seeds of his thought in his academy ! He would throw out handfuls of sentences, sometimes pompous in style, a little ridiculous in form, reminding one slightly of maxims and aphorisms of the prototypes of the *bourgeoisie*, Messieurs Prud'homme and Brid'oison, but full of truth and of deep respect for art and beauty. Here are some of them :—

Le dessin c'est la probité de l'art.

Il faut donner de la santé à la forme.

Le calme est la première beauté du corps.

The last sentence is very interesting ; it is strange, however, that Ingres' view was the same as that of Baudelaire, whose ideas were vastly different

from his, but who said, "*Je hais le monument qui déplace les lignes.*" Sometimes, however, Ingres' impetuosity made him one-sided and prejudiced. Everybody who differed from him was his foe, and for this reason he said that Rubens was a painter of slaughter houses, a kind of butcher-artist, fond of blood . . . "*chez Rubens il y a avant tout de la chair fraîche dans la pensée et de l'étal dans la mise-en-scène.*"

Speaking of ideals in art he exclaimed: "Sirs, one must dominate one's mind in order to be able to distinguish truth from falsehood. This result is reached through onesidedness; one should eliminate everything that is not beautiful, and live with beauty always. How amusing and monstrous is the love that turns at the same time to Murillo and Raphael!"

And yet this passionate man was called cold and devoid of temperament both by his admirers and his adversaries; all of them would have shut him up in the narrow formula of classicism and put on him the label of an academician. Disgusted with the sharp criticism of such judges as Landon and Kératry, and perhaps discouraged at not being understood by the would-be classics, Ingres left Paris in 1834, and went to Rome as director of the *Académie de France*. There he diffused amongst the young students the cult of the beautiful; from thence he sent to his country such marvellous pictures as "Stratonice," "The Holy Virgin with a Wafer," "Raphael and the Fornarina," "Pius VII," "Francesca di Rimini," "Roger delivering Angelica," "Odalisque," "The Portrait

of Cherubini," etc. Those pictures were received by the public and the critics not as masterpieces, which they really are, but as arguments *pro et contra* in the dispute with the school of Delacroix ; and when, in 1841, the admirers of Ingres persuaded him to return to Paris, they did so in order to make of him a banner under which might gather together the survivors of the defeated classics.

When Ingres settled in Paris (1861) he was already very old. Surrounded by the respect of some, persecuted by the hatred of others, he painted, preached, and got angry as formerly. Neither fame nor age tranquillized that seething nature. He was as determined a fighter as he was a zealous propagandist ; none of his hatred died, none of his cults became weaker. He would cry at the opera when listening to Glück's *Alceste*, and go to the museums to copy antique sculpture that "he might learn how to draw." Proud and unbending in his old age, he was able to say : "Down to this day the fear of opinion has never made me retreat one inch, because I have considered it to be a point of honour to remain faithful to my old convictions, which I will never give up, not at the last hour of my life." He was 82 years old when he pronounced the words *etiamsi omnes, ego non*.

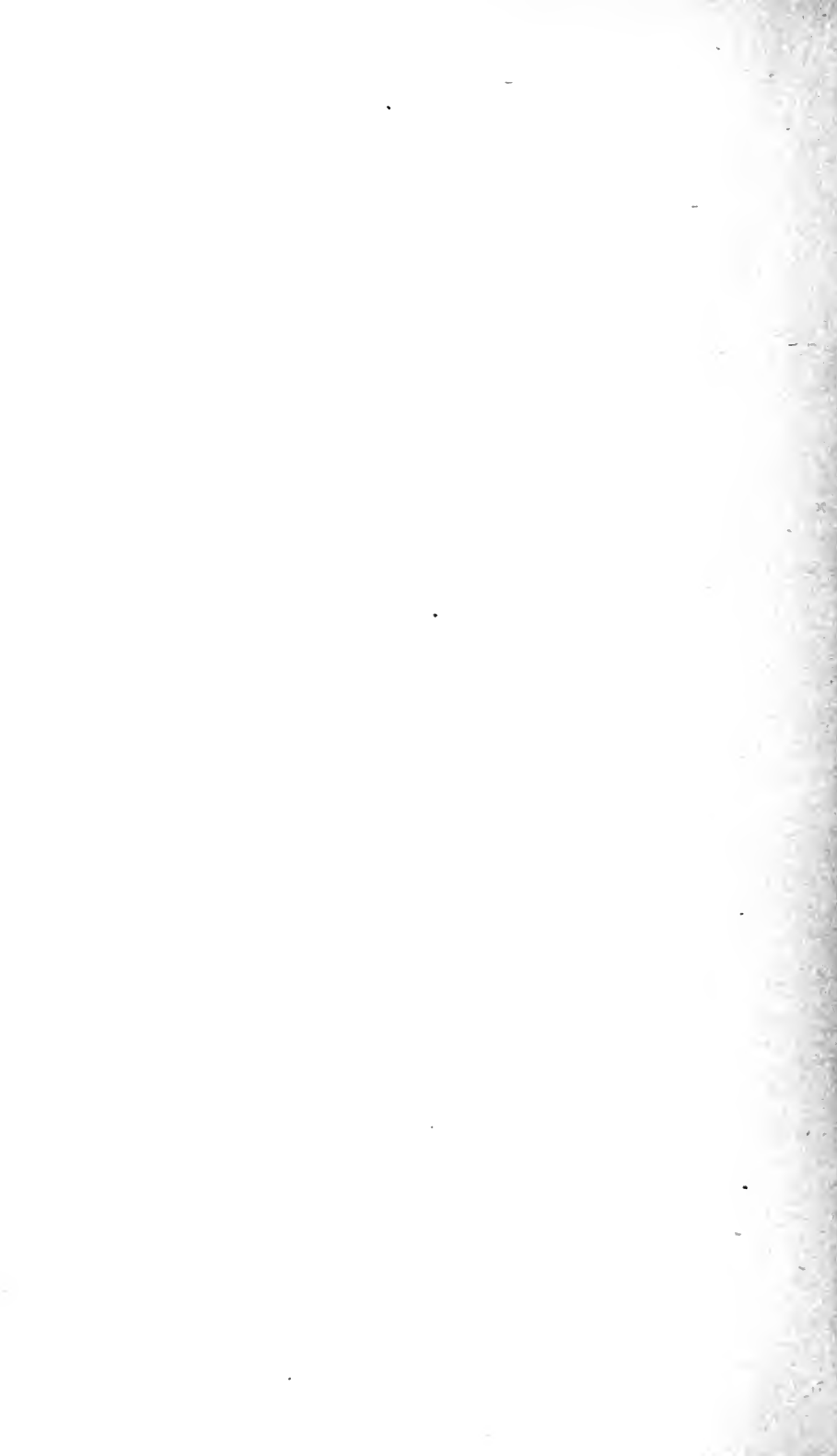
The years had no influence over him ; his everlasting vitality enabled him to produce new works not inferior to those he had done when he was of mature age. It was quite in advanced age that he painted "La Source," a figure that embodies all the charms of virginity, then "Venus," which represents the mature type of womanly beauty, and the

already mentioned "Turkish Bath." How far are these three works from the woman whom a poet called *l'enfant malade et douze fois impur!* Ingres' types of women are vigorous and invigorating; they are wrapped up in youthful poetry and the majesty of beauty.

Ingres is not a colourist, if by colouring we should understand not the composition of colours, but the mutual play of reflection. He said, with romantic pomposity, "*le reflet est indigne de la majesté de l'histoire,*" a saying which, although apparently ridiculous, is not wrong, for the principal point in colouring is its strength and certainty, while its quality is the relation of shade to light and their delicate tones. All those qualities are in Ingres' pictures. There is something more, for his palette shines sometimes with a rare variety of colours; some of his pictures remind one of the oriental, faded brocades and rugs, while others make one think of the illuminations in old prayer-books.

Therefore when Ingres' contemporary critic, Theophile Silvestre, called him *un Chinois égaré dans les rues d'Athènes*, wishing to make him ridiculous, he unintentionally very well characterized his art. In order to love it one must look intently at it, for, as he said, *les chefs-d'œuvre ne sont pas pour éblouir; ils sont pour convaincre.*

**EDWARD MUNCH**



## EDWARD MUNCH

EDWARD MUNCH was born in Norway. Norway, the country of bright mountains and mystic nights ; the country of strange majesty, and of heavy and oppressive melancholy ; Norway, the most tragic country in Europe. It is a small piece of land, that has been formed by the gradual breaking away of the mountains during thousands of years. Part of these mountains was carried by the glaciers far beyond the sea ; Norway remained bare, with its granite rocks, whilst the land stolen from it became the fertile countries of Frisia and Holland.

Again the mountains started on a desperate work, a work lasting for ages ; again they formed a thin stratum of fertile soil, and on this grew gigantic, interminable forests : the whole of Norway is composed of mountains and forests.

Over this land of mountains, forests, and sea hangs a depressing melancholy. There is no escaping from it ; it is an ever-present reality ; its saddening influence is felt in the red half-dusk of the summer nights, when within an hour the sun sinks to rest in the sea. It is felt when the first winds of autumn tear the leaves from the trees, and the nights, with all their painful weight of blackness, roll down from the mountains, but

its utmost awfulness and hopelessness is only experienced during the latter part of autumn.

It reaches its zenith in November, when the bare trees, like dark ghosts, stand out against a background of lowering, lead-coloured sky ; when the earth is covered with a carpet of putrefied leaves, and the rain falling continuously for weeks changes the ground into a muddy swamp ; when for whole weeks the sun is invisible, and there is nothing but fog and rain, rain and fog ; then that vast desert, that awful solitude, becomes a pain. The inhabitants are entirely cut off from the world. There is ever the yellow light of the lamp, ever the same faces ; the people go silently to and fro, they avoid one another, they hate themselves. We here have no idea what solitude really is ; we know not the gloomy way of looking into the secrets of the soul.

And under the depressing influence of the sobbing of the continual rain, and the black cover of the lead-like, murky sky, the sky that oppresses one, even within the house, the soul of the usually calm and intelligent Norwegian becomes unstrung. Evil and gloomy thoughts spring up within him, like bubbles on a poisonous morass. Vague sentiments of fear creep forth from the mysterious depths of his soul ; his brain loses its strength, and a limitless rule over the defenceless state of the soul commences. He has no power to bridle the fear and despair that have seized upon him, and he ceases to defend himself against the nightmare feeling that pervades his whole house. He takes the old and forgotten Bible from a garret,



devours the Word of God, turns and twists it, and loses the thoughts of the words. Then he tries to recover his senses, for there is still a small spark of common sense remaining in his brain, that tells him all this is mere foolishness—but, alas! it is too late.

He searches the inmost recesses of his heart, he lives once more, a whole life in every second; once more he ruminates over every thought, and the fear and despair mount ever higher and higher, arresting his breath and quenching every other sentiment. Sin is in every thought and deed, and all that is not sin the brain changes into opprobrium.

The cup of sin is full—there is no remedy, no redemption, no pity. From behind the black mourning-cloth there looks forth the awe-inspiring face of the biblical Jehovah, in the full awe of vengeance and pitilessness.

There is no remedy.

Satan, the god of the miserable and desperate, fixes his claws into the misguided soul, and like a wedge, the sentiment of damnation and eternal death enters into every cellule of the brain.

The soul is in despair.

There is no repentance that can wash that sin from the soul, and at length the days of utter despair change into days of intoxication. When once one is in the power of Satan, it matters not if one sin lead to the others. And sin is prolific.

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Oftentimes already have German artists come

under the influence of this strange phenomenon. The delirium of the soul, tortured by despair, has been reproduced in numerous works, both by Jan Luyken, the unbridled, fantastic Calvinist, and by the rather hellish Breughel. In "Fred" Arne Garborg has described with unrivalled force the entire development of that malady. Huysmans, by birth and culture a thorough German artist, represents in *En route* the most complicated and most painful manifestations of that chaos. And it is in this atmosphere of fear and despair, under this terrible inclination towards evil, followed by contrition, that Edward Munch has dreamed his gloomy pictures.

His whole artistic creative power lies in the despair of the soul chastised by fear. In all his work we find the same sentiment, which ceases to be a conscious sentiment, and is lost in the depths of eternity: the presentiment of the tortures of hell, of damnation, and eternal death. And over all that Munch creates hang the black clouds, the depressing heavens, and the anger of an avenging Jehovah. Everywhere there looks forth the despairing eye of pessimism that sees nothing in life save pain and brutal violence.

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A picture: a bold, strong line of coast forming a bay in the foreground, and lost to view in the distance. On the shore are two groups of trees, and amongst them can be seen the white walls of a fisherman's hut. A dam juts out into the sea, and on it stand two figures—the girl is

dressed in white. Overhead the sky in all the wild gorgeousness of twilight is torn into wide stripes of fading purple fire.

And from out the melancholy produced by the unutterably sad, sultry twilight, from out the gloomy majesty of quiet melancholy of a Norwegian fjord, from out the night-fall saturated with numerous eternal mysteries, and with a presentiment of new weariness, and new pains, the white spot of the girl's dress shines forth like a strange, mysterious, impenetrable charm.

And that white spot enters the soul, awakening therein a thousand incomprehensible sentiments and sensations. No ! not sentiments, only the dim presentiment of these sentiments, only the most remote, most secret echo of the expected light. Around this spot of white the whole landscape is concentrated, and whilst looking on the endless line of coast, and on the summit of the compact mass of trees enveloped in mist, the soul constantly returns to the wonderful charm of that white spot.

All at once we understand the mystery of the picture. The artist was walking one evening along the shore of the fjord. His soul, in mysterious concentration, was gazing into its fathomless depth. He noticed not the fading splendour of the sky, he noticed not the mountains, raising their wild summits to the clouds, he noticed not the white mist rising over the shore, or the gigantic mass of black trees. He looked thoughtfully before him, seeing nothing. But suddenly the white spot entered into his soul, and it awoke.

He looked surprised : then he distinctly saw two

figures. Probably they will enter a boat and go on the sea.

This simple impression stirred his soul to its depths. Those two were in love, they would enter a boat, would go away into the distance, would lean on each other, would look at the rising stars, would dream and feel, whilst their souls flowed into the infinity of the sea.

And again he resented the awful burden of his solitude. Like the ivy growing over and entwining a ruin, longing and the dark pain of solitude embraced his heart.

And in that weariness and pain the visible landscape of the fjord changed and became something new and unknown. The sky burned with the wild might of passionate desires, the shapeless body of trees took the form of gigantic, terrible archangels, who watched the white house as though it had been a precious paradise; the boat, that was scarcely visible in the dusk, took life and became a very important item in that chaos of dusk and atrophy of colour, for in it the holy mystery would be accomplished, the melting of two souls, the fusion of two bodies into one.

The artist returned home. But in his dreams, in his burdensome thoughtfulness, the white spot of the dress, and the red boat, shone forth continually. They left him no peace, and the whole scene, that had lasted but for one second, became a mighty force, shaking his whole being.

And he painted the sky, as in the pain of his solitude he had seen it; painted it torn into wild stripes by a mad chaos of colours; he painted

the trees in the shape of two mountains, so as to represent the silent, deep mystery of the white house between ; and he painted the line of the shore, but no ! there he painted the wild and endless line of his own longing, reaching into eternity ; and through it all there are two lines, between which flows the fiery wave of the thought that lived but for one second : the white dress and the red boat.

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Such is the path along which Munch's soul travels.

Ever but one or two elements from a whole row of phenomena ; but these impressions are the most remote, most secret reflections of the dawn, which, entering into his soul like lightning, kindles therein a fire which, by its glare, changes the whole world, devours the forms and colours in which the brain sees it, and discloses its alarming depth, its inmost being.

By his powerful intuition he is able to seize the cause of our intentions and deeds.

For in order to arouse within me a sentiment that would drive me mad, neither dramatic scenes, nor the death of my dearest ones, nor a murder are necessary.

These are theatrical means.

To enable my soul to blossom with love, peace will be sufficient ; some remote sound will suffice to render my soul creative—and that transient glance, that silent pressure of the hand, that remote sound, that spot of white dress—these are the only

true elements from which our most powerful sentiments originate, these are the hidden sources whence issue small brooks of sentiment, which little by little swell into rivers, whirl round the brain, and finally sprout forth, geyser-like, great sentiments of great virtue or great crime.

These small impressions disappear in consciousness, they are scattered like the seeds of autumn flowers, but the soul was fecundated in one second by that vision.

What the artist has now created was already an accomplished fact in the soul; it was its fruit, waiting in readiness, with all the logical connections and logical causes which the brain has thought out, and which are usually false.

Munch gives the bare impression that awakens life within the soul; he caresses it, and nourishes it with his soul's blood, until it becomes a gigantic body full of might and glory.

Consequently, that which is the most important thing for the artist's reality of brain, shape, colour, form, such as one sees in Nature, becomes for Munch secondary and accidental, making at most a frame for his impressions.

What cares he that the sky never looked as he has painted it? At the moment when life awoke within his soul his pain was throwing on the heavens that bloody conflagration of crushing suns. At that moment he saw not the mountains on which were growing pine and fir-trees; he saw but shapeless, ghost-like, thickly outlined masses.

What matters it that the forest looks like a strip of black ribbon, if it expresses the gigantic

line at the moment when man suffers, and cries aloud in his pain, if it reproduces in my line the trembling of fear and the awful melancholy of solitude?

\* \* \* \* \*

Another picture.

Which of us has not seen a boat moored in the sea during the noonday heat? But perhaps never was there wound around that simple scene any deeper line of sentiment. In the soul of this visionary, however, a depth was opened.

That hour of tranquillity, in which the whole organism of the world seems to be a tiger waiting in an apparent calm for a destructive spring, becomes for Munch a vampire.

That dreadful calm, which we feel, perhaps, only during a complete eclipse of the sun, held, in the consciousness of the primitive peoples, something pernicious and awful. The terrible "Noon-ghost" of the Slav peoples, that struck the harvesters dead at one blow, hovers in the air above the Northern sea, in Munch's pictures. The next moment the whirlpool will seize the defenceless boat and precipitate it into the abyss.

A yellow sail, a horribly yellow sail, occupies almost the entire background of the picture. The edge of the boat is seen like a thin red line. And in the boat, that death is stirring, sits an old fisherman.

Death, that incomprehensible end of incomprehensible life, attracts the whole attention of the painter-philosopher.

Some black presentiment of death has stretched

its mourning-cloth over everything that Munch has created. Death has wrapped in its pall his dusky fjords; death is lying in wait in the sultry noon-day heat; death has contorted the face of a drowned man lying at the bottom of the sea; death looks out from the widely opened eyes of a naked girl-child, who for the first time feels the sentiment of love and of death. A hideous, abominable skeleton presses to itself a young woman.

The germ of annihilation pervades every sentiment; every desire, every thought is imbued with that dark presentiment of death.

Munch knows no happiness in love. For him love is a terrible torture, a painful mystery, the gift of Pandora, who gave to the world tears, decomposition, and pain.

And the artist-philosopher strays in the darkness of problems. Evidently he is unable to answer these questions, but the conviction of the existence of some dreadful and destructive power in the life of love has so burned his brain that every sensation of love that he receives awakes the same questions within him, and the dark pessimism of his soul mounts, in all its black splendour.

This is his most important work, a work of genius, showing everything in a new light, creating new syntheses, and opening new horizons in life.

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Munch's principal work, and a work on which he is constantly engaged, is a cycle of pictures: Love!



A grove of young birch-trees stands bathed in the mystic charm of moonlight; beyond it is the sea—again, and always the sea—in which, as in a stream of molten silver, the moon looks at itself. In the foreground is outlined a figure, a face, from which looks forth the eager desire of two eyes.

The whole picture, strictly speaking, is that pair of eyes, that in painful straining search for something to quench the conflagration of the blood. Perhaps, once the artist caught the transient glance of eyes, that for the first time cried in the eager longing of a passionate girl. Perhaps for one second the lightning of burning lust passed over her face, and the talented prophet seized that which others would have found difficult to grasp. That lightning entered into his soul, not like the ordinary glance, that blossoms on the face of a girl when caressing the delights of the moon, but as a conscious cosmic impulse that searches for sexual completion, and throws the man and woman on each other, in order that the human species may be continued.

It is a great symbol of maturing sex. It comes into existence suddenly, grows shapeless, and is difficult to be grasped. It is concentrated in the torture of dark longing, and demands shape and incarnation. It is the longing of conception, the painful longing to become matured, a muffled uneasiness, an intense listening how the blood boils in the veins, it is half woe, half delight, on the dark background of sexual irritations:

Venus Anadyomene!

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Another picture represents a girl, who during the night became a woman, and sits with burning eyes and the hectic blushes of desire on her face.

The same matured female appears in the other picture as a vampire. She is biting a man's neck, her blood-red hair falls over his face, she encircles his head with her strong arm of unbridled passion, and presses and bites him. And the background—it is chaotic lightnings of blood-red purple, poisonous greens, a mad chaos of different spots, colours, dots—then some small crystals, such as are seen on frozen window-panes.

And the whole is awful, pitiless, almost passionless, in its immeasurable resignation.

For that man rolls down the precipice without will, without strength, almost happy that he is able to roll down without any effort of will.

Here the whole pessimism of sex bursts out most passionately.

Love might be happiness peripherically. It magnifies, so powerfully, the forces of the spirit, stirs so marvellously the impressions of the senses, and so treacherously ensnares the brain, that it revolves, like the ball in roulette, round a few boundary posts of momentary pleasure.

But the old, eternal soul, the powerful king-spirit, that has survived all the storms of development, cannot be easily deceived. In the depths of that "naked soul" love is felt as a perpetual pain, as a biting vampire, as a torture; it is torture to be unable to throw off the yoke of the woman, and never, never to be able to satisfy the hungry demons of passion.

But amidst the most charming blossoms of happiness there suddenly bursts forth the fiery lava of the old volcano, and there comes a moment when one recognizes that this happiness is the happiness of worms, produced by the sun on a dunghill. There is a moment, however, when woman ceases to be a vampire. In the absolute surrender of herself to one man—the only one, and the last—all that is bad in her disappears.

A strange immaculateness shines forth in her face, the beauty of the eternal mystery of conception rising in her soul blooms in her eyes, whilst around her there trembles a luminous glory of delight, that ceases to be a delight of the body, and becomes an ascension into heaven.

It is the moment in the soul of a woman when she forgets everything around her, and becomes a timeless and spaceless being, the moment in which she conceives immaculately.

But such moments are rare. It is very rare that a man, and still rarer that a woman has tasted that unearthly happiness, when two souls blend together in awful majesty.

Generally, it is suffering.

The suffering of a man.

For in that eternal fight the man usually gives way. The woman, with her lesser passion, sooner or later dominates the man, who, ever, again and again, must conquer the woman.

The man, who suffers—the desperate Adam who wishes to melt the woman into his soul, into his blood, but cannot because the nature of sexual

differences is stronger than his will—this is the principal subject of Munch's pictures.

And there is ever the same painful conviction that the man and the woman are two completely different and differently organized beings, each of whom feels differently, and thinks differently, that they can never understand each other, or if it should sometimes happen, it is only through the violation of one soul by the other.

And this tragedy of dominated man, this awful yoke which, perhaps, never weighed more heavily than in the present time, Munch reproduces in his pictures by gigantic sketches.

There is the despair of the man, who searches for the only one, searches everywhere, sees her everywhere, and can find her nowhere.

There is a long street, and on it a long row of female figures, all similar to each other.

His heart throbs—throbs. . . . Every one of them passing there is she, the only one. Ah! And always there is the same disappointment. His eyes search each face in mad uneasiness. There she passes—there. He sees her in each one, but—it is not she—not she.

He will see her no longer. Tired, and in pain, he looks vaguely before him. Afar off, somewhere towards the end of the street, the rays of the setting sun light up an upper window. That burning window attracts his eye. For a moment his whole brain is concentrated on that window. It is thus that the man who has a fever, or the man who is about to commit suicide, views the world. The people unite in one black wave that flows forward,

returns, hesitates, and again advances, but some small detail, some burning window, becomes for him the whole universe, something that exists exclusively, and has dominated all his being.

And that mad symphony of the suffering of a man boils ever higher and higher.

The landscape is outlined in thick lines, in idiotic, dull penumbras. In the front, as in the Chinese pictures, there is a man's decapitated head, plunged into some bottomless abyss of suffering, of pain that has ceased to be pain. It is jealousy ! But it is not the jealousy of a man who has been deceived, it is the jealousy of a desperate lover, who looks into the woman's eyes to see if there is not some deceitful thought ; who spies out all her steps ; who interprets her every word ; and who, mad with pain, would rend her brain to discover whether the thought of another had not entered there.

His soul is wounded—bleeding. He feels that he can never rid himself of that sentiment, that he will never know her thoughts, that she will never be able to calm him, for he knows that the woman's truth is an unconscious lie, and that for this there is no remedy.

The wings of despair rustle round the man's head.

“ Shriek ! ”

It is impossible to give an idea of this picture, for the whole of its wondrous power lies in colour.

The sky becomes mad at the cry of that poor son of Eve. Each pain is an abyss of red blood ; all the long cries of agony are gigantic stripes,

unequally and brutally mixed together, like the boiling elements of rising worlds during the wild outcry of creation.

The sky cries aloud, all Nature is concentrated in an awful hurricane of shrieks, and in the front, on a bridge, stands a shrieking man. He presses his head with both hands, for because of such shrieking his veins burst, and his hair turns white. . . .

Ah ! life !

\* \* \* \* \*

A good God has created pure beings, and His dominion is over a good and beautiful kingdom.

An evil spirit has created matter, dirt, and misery. He has conquered this vale of weeping, and he rules over it, for the good God does not descend to earth, does not care about it.

And these two elements are repeated in the human soul, where evil lies beside the good, equally strong, eternal, and infinite. Besides the greatest profligacy, which man is not responsible for, because it is grafted in his soul by God, there is the germ of grace and perfection.

Perhaps Munch was thinking of this cosmic doctrine when he synthesized his woman.

The good God in woman is "Symbol," but this God is only an ideal. Perhaps once, by the power of his will, man embodies his warmest dreams, and through his own love spreads the luminous glory of beauty and immaculateness round the woman. The good God is the boundless love of the mother, but in the woman's soul the black god dominates,

the demon of vanity, which, even when she surrendered herself to one man, displayed his peacock-tail before a thousand other men, and attracted them towards her—the bad Huldra, who, even if she be faithful to one, sets snares for a thousand others. Munch's woman is a passionless light, in which the moths are pitilessly burned; she is like the female reindeer, that calmly eats the grass, whilst the two males are tearing out their bowels for her.

And this theme is constantly repeated by Munch.

At one time he represents woman as a mythical griffin, tearing the remains of a man—her wings are already spread for flight, already she is gazing into the distance, searching for a new victim, but she casts one more look, a look cold, pitiless, and contemptuous, on that stupid beast, the man, who allows himself to be torn.

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It is difficult to characterize Munch's powerful individuality. I have only desired to draw attention towards him, because he cuts out new paths in the forests, because he passes through the wildest thickets, breaking off the branches that intercept the road, in order that others following him may find their way.

He has reproduced, for the first time, the naked states of the soul, as they are manifested independently of any action of the brain. His pictures are simply conditions of the soul in moments when the voice of common sense is not heard, and the activity of the brain has ceased—conditions of the

soul when it perishes in gloomy atrophy, shrieking with pain and howling with hunger.

Almost all painters have been, and are, painters of the exterior world. Every sentiment they wished to portray was, by them, first clothed in some external action, every feeling they took from external surroundings. The sentiments were always relative, and obtained by means of the external world. To express the state of the soul by exterior accidents was a tradition strictly observed by all painters. Munch has departed from this tradition. He endeavours to represent the phenomena of the soul directly by colour. As can be seen, he only paints nude individuals, whose eyes, turned away from the world of phenomena, are looking into the depths of their own existence. He sees his landscape in his soul, perhaps like the picture of Plato's anamnesis. His rocks resemble the grimaces of devils seen in feverish dreams; the boundaries of horizon, for him, do not exist, his boats seem to sail on the sky: his pictures are the absolute equivalents of certain impressions. This is, therefore, an entirely new field of art, which Munch has been the first to open; he has no predecessor, and no tradition.

Munch desires to express the psychological state of the soul, not mythologically, but directly, in its coloured equivalent, and from that point of view he is a naturalist of psychological phenomena.

He paints the dread and woe of life; he paints the chaos of fever, and deep uneasiness full of vague presentiments; he paints the theory that cannot be deduced logically, but can be felt in



moments of most dreadful fear, as we feel death, without being able to imagine it.

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His style of painting is powerful, deep, and strong, as are his visions.

He is a symphonist of colours in the same sense that Beethoven is a symphonist of sounds. All that Munch represents are symphonies of sentiments, which change with him into colours, in the same accidental way as they did with Beethoven into sounds.

Munch expresses himself with the same absoluteness in colours as others do through the medium of sounds.

And if it be possible sometimes to change sound into colour, and to find the equivalent in sound corresponding with colour, then the crowd that laughs at Munch, but is capable of listening to Beethoven's symphony to the end, with some understanding, will be convinced that Munch must paint in the style he does, and that he could not paint otherwise.

This explains why Munch never had either a predecessor or a teacher ; no one could teach him anything.



**FELICIEN ROPS**



## FELICIEN ROPS

STRANGE is the lot of some artists !

Misunderstanding him, many people connect closely perverse profligacy, unbridled sensuality and intoxicating eroticism with Rops' name. Not knowing him well they are pleased to see in that artist an individuality similar to that of the Marquess de Sade in literature or Gilles de Rays in life.

Rops' admirers, judging him according to their own artistic conceptions, putting him on the altar erected for their own gods, lessen the value of his works.

Huysman, Barbey d'Aurevilly, see in him a Catholic fighting the demon of bawdiness ; Demolder and Rebell think he is an inheritor of Jordaens' sensuality, of Eulenspiegel's joviality, and Brueghel's mysticism.

It is interesting to note that all of them are right to a certain extent. But the first two mentioned writers forget Rops' early works, which, if less deep, are forcible, full of life and truth, while the later critics overlook the sharp demoniacal characteristics to be found in his ulterior etchings and lithographs.

Rops' activity as an artist is divided in two phases : at the beginning he draws what he sees ; later he renders that which he feels. Then his

creative power becomes deeper, and his works resemble the former only by an unheard-of sensibility for the slightest changes of shape and by scrupulous observation of the faintest expression of feeling. He remains always a great sensualist, as are almost all painters of the Netherlands. Because of sensuality he is their son and heir while the Hungarian blood—Rops' grandfather was a countryman of Jokaj—gave him the mad impulse and warmed the Dutch phlegm inherited from his mother.

During the first period of his artistic efforts Rops was a pantheist, looking at and listening to everything that lives, moves, shines, attracts, and repels. During that time he looked without and not within him ; he represented the charm of Flemish homes, the types of his country that attracted him by their national beauty, amused him by their grotesqueness, or aroused the warm pity that almost every heart feels for sadness, misery, and old age. Rops' thought was then for his native country, and he produced such masterly works as *l'Enterrement au pays Wallon*, *l'Experte en dentelles*, *l'Oncle Claes et la tante Johanna*, *La laitière anversoise*, *Oude Kate*, and many others.

In those etchings and lithographs one feels Courbet's slight influence, while Rops' peasants remind one a little of the hard, dried up, sad types, rough, as if made of black earth, painted by Jean-François Millet. This, however, lessens neither the value nor the originality of Rops' work. He always knew how to remain himself. Those reminiscences are perchance more literary than plastic ; the

type of the slave attached to the black earth was then *en vogue*. Thus Rops also has penetrated with the poetry of work the healthy Flemish farm boys. *Semeur* has all those characteristics ; on a sandy stretch of land, covered with stones, weeds, low bushes of juniper, and bristling with dried stems, a tall, sad peasant is sowing with even, measured movements the grain that will never sprout.

Rops is devoted to the sandy hills of Flanders stretching along the coast ; he is attracted by their colour of gold ; while enduring the rain he is fascinated by the veil of clouds in which the shores and the waves are wrapped and seem to slumber.

He is also passionately fond of the sea ; one could say he loves it as one does a desired woman. Only Swinburne admires the sea in the same sensual way ; for both of them the myth about Venus rising up from the waves and foam becomes the truth.

Such is one side of Rops' creative power. Here is another.

He was more than thirty years of age when he settled in Paris, and was intoxicated with its atmosphere, made hot by thinking, creating, and high living, where ideas and sensations vibrate and shine like gold dust. His sensitive nerves felt all the shivers of the great town. In that smithy were wrought all his new thoughts. Here he acquired new ideas. He was bewitched by the Parisian woman, whom he wished to understand, to fathom. After the healthy Flemish girls, the Parisian woman seemed to him to be like a doll, and he said that

she is *un composé de carton, de taffetas, de nerfs et de poudre de riz*. Looking more closely at her, he found in her elements which he had not noticed elsewhere. Gradually the Parisian woman gave him the madness of love, followed by the sin and pain.

When Rops settled in Paris he was of an age at which the animal side of man loses its strength and when he gains refinement and imagination, when love becomes complicated and is like a flame burning with the desire of something new and unknown. Then the honeymoon is followed by satiety, disillusion and regret concerning woman; for this reason Rops bestowed on her in his drawings a crown made of seven capital sins.

He looks at woman and represents her as a destructive element, an emissary of hell, a venomous, shameless creature, devil's servant, a cup of deadly henbane, an eternal temptation sent for the perdition of the world.

From this point of view Huysman and Barby d'Aurevilly are right to consider Rops as one of them, for the pantheist and the observer of the real manifestations of existence turns into a deep, Catholic mystic, who, preserving all his previous qualities, produces masterpieces in which licentiousness is covered with the shine of phosphorus, and is burning like a will-o'-the-wisp over marshes.

Rops, who at one time enjoyed in a heathenish way the world and its pleasures, now turned a Catholic in whom were resuscitated the former beliefs, and who recollected the scent of incense, the ringing of bells, the chanting of the liturgy,



the whisper of prayers, and the mumbling of exorcisms. Forgotten fears and dreams from the time of the Jesuit College of Nôtre Dame de la Paix, near Namur, where he was brought up, old ghosts and temptations crept out from the corners of his soul and, nimble, shivering, vicious, and sweet, they rushed on his *clichés*.

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Following tradition—it may be that he was prompted by his own impulse—Rops unites the beauty of feminine forms with the fearful productions of his fancy, although it must be stated that amongst all demographers he is distinguished by an unusual feeling of measure, of balance, and logic of human forms, as well as by a great understanding of harmony and of life. Rops' monsters are full of probability and possibility of existence ; they are alive—one is tempted to say—they are true, and they make one shiver by their peculiar beauty.

The most dreadful monster in Rops' gallery is the last and faithful lover . . . death, that lurks from all his works ; only death represented by him is strange, vile, and sensuous. It does not look on us from the threshold of eternity ; it has not behind it nothingness, nor eternal torture, nor even satisfied profligacy, nor biting and continually re-emerging desires. Death represented by Rops is *mors erotica*, death that bites by kisses, kills by delight and suffering during the desperate spasm of passion.

His *clichés* are powerful works in which the bodies shiver continually without being relieved or satisfied ; tied with lustful chains they writhe,

scourged by the senses and burnt with passion. Eroticism shouts, howls, and becomes despair, plague, curse.

Rops' women, flexible and strong as steel, beautiful and nimble as panthers, are fearful as something infinitely dangerous, insensible, but tempting, alluring, and invincible. In his drawings woman appears not as a mere creature carrying joy and dissipation, but like a vampire and a wicked spirit of darkness ; she is almost a cosmic power ; she burns as fire ; she frightens as a thunderbolt ; she deludes as a chasm ; she was sent into the world—as it seems—by the evil one that he might enlarge his dusky dominion through her and rule over it with her help.

This thought is expressed by Rops in the allegory *Satan semant l'ivraie*. It represents a gigantic sower standing over Paris in the dark and quiet night ; he puts his straddling feet over roofs and towers, he dominates the silent and helpless town ; with a broad gesture he throws among the people seeds of vice, suffering, crime, and hatred in the shape of woman's masks ; he has plenty of them ; he scatters them broadcast, and knows that his sowing will be fruitful ; he smiles sarcastically, his eyes shine with pleasure, his bony face beaming with delight.

This etching is pathetic, cruel, and mercilessly eloquent.

Another etching, so intensely tragic that once seen it remains for ever in one's memory, is *La Buveuse d'absinthe*. With eyes dimmed by drunkenness, full of dreaming hallucination, a pale

bluish mask looks at one. It is a condensation of madness of inebriety ; it is a symbol and synthesis of absinthe, of green, devouring poison, killing like *cicuta* and producing the cry of folly. This etching is *delirium tremens* embodied in the shape of woman.

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When an artist reaches such dramatic strength and such poetic feeling, he cannot be accused of being indecent.

Rops' sensual intensity is so strong that the erotic part disappears and loses its connection with the instinct of the preservation of the species.

Works originated under the influence of an excited brain are not and could not be simple aphrodisiacs, as some people are inclined to think. A thought penetrated so much with passion, because of that tremendous intenseness, is not the result of ordinary mental hysteria, but seems rather to be a true satanic whisper, a great biblical sin.

Looking at Rops' *clichés* one is inclined to believe that they were conceived not by an ordinary physiological impulse—even be it despairingly exalted—but by the evil spirit that is hidden in the brain, which tempts and soils the intellect and, as was the case with the great anchorites, forces one to see, to feel, and to desire, and then to suffer in the helpless fight with the lustful nightmare.

It is clear that Rops felt and thought in that way, for in his drawings woman is represented in the same way as she appeared to the saints visited by temptation—according to the Catholic and Manicheistic idea—that is to say, as an evil element,

dragging one's soul into eternal perdition, destroying holy thoughts and the great purposes of humankind. 'Rops' idea of the wrongsided holiness is strange indeed, for his mad women are as mystic as are the virgins of Fra Angelico, of Memling, and of Roger van der Weyden, while his saturnalias resemble much the black masses during which the devil proclaims himself god, and great mysteries are celebrated in his honour.

This is how Rops represents woman. His etchings are not jovial, gross jokes of sensual monks, nor boudoir pictures of Boucher or Fragonard; nor are they the lascivious, but healthy sensualities of the ancients personified by Venus and Priapus. No, they are painful visions like those of the anchorites of the Tebaid, or like the dance of Herodiada drunk with blood, like shivers of suffering and intoxication.

Consequently these mystic characteristics so distinct in Rops' work forbid that he should be compared, as some people do, with that genial sensualist Rodin, or still less with the purely heathenish Clodion.

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Rops' individuality is so great—especially in the last period of his activity—his talent is so strong and so original that he cannot be subjected to any precise filiation, but in order to understand his work a few analogies should be pointed out and his affinity with other creators should be indicated.

There are but a very few minds that could influence Rops. However, that influence should be

searched for rather in literature than in art. Even that influence is but very slight, for Rops listened, looked, thought, and then produced works stamped with his own genius.

It is true that while he is the poet of reality—taking his subjects from his surroundings—by his innate charm he stands near the masters of the North: there is in him a little of Cranach, of Brueghel, and—as it was already said—of Courbet and Millet, but even those masters had hardly touched his soul, and then only on the surface.

In the second period of his artistic life—surprised by new sensations, bewitched by feminine fascination, and frightened by its might, when he created the cycle *Les Sataniques*, or when he illustrated Barbey d'Aurevilly's and Pélledan's books, when he produced works full of awe, or when in *Théâtre Gaillard* and *Point de lendemain* he reproduced the conflagration of the bodies burnt by the passion of lust, desiring continually, even after death, even in the grave, everywhere and always; when with an heroic impetuosity he shaped out women that seemed to be incarnations of the perpetual fire—Rops even then preserved the religious sentiment which is to be found amongst the mystic foes of feminine charms.

The mystics made an effort—Rops does the same—to despise woman as an impure vase of sin; they curse her, but are longing after her, loving her like madmen. They are Rops' spiritual brothers—Swinburne, Baudelaire, Barbey d'Aurevilly, and all those who see in woman a bait sent into the world by Evil to fight Good, the first cause

of miseries, troubles, sufferings, and sins of the accursed Adamites, an eternal disappointment and bitter disillusion.

In the meanwhile one is bound to say that Rops remains himself, as one could see from the illustrations made for Barbey d'Aurevilly's *Le Bonheur dans le Crime*, in which he rendered not a sporadic fact, but the idea of happiness in crime.

Gorgona's head, standing on a pedestal, entwines with its viperous locks a man and woman kissing each other passionately ; they seem to be fused in one by their sentiment towards each other, he seeing nothing but the beloved woman, she heeding nought but his caresses ; they radiate with bliss. At the foot of the pedestal there writhes a woman shouting despairingly. Unhappy, she is dying there at the bottom, while they, on the elevation of blessedness, inaccessible, seem to challenge destiny ; her sufferings are helpless, because nobody sees them.

In such a broad manner Rops understood Barbey d'Aurevilly's story.

That proud independence from the thought conceived by some one else, that understanding of the theme in his own way, permitted the artist to produce works superior to the average standard. Rops is not an illustrator, but a creator *par excellence* ; his illustrations are rather genial transcriptions and variations of the given subjects than exact interpretations. For this reason one of his best conceived etchings is to be found at the head of Pélledan's *La vie suprême*. That *cliché* called *Finis Latinorum* represents in half-opened coffin Salomé,

or to be more precise, only her skeleton clad in woman's fineries, smiling and cringing; from underneath the petticoat coquettishly lifted one sees bones with silk stockings on, while from under the bodice there stick out ribs sharp as fish-bones. Nothing remained of woman except the eternal desire of alluring and of tempting. Beside her stands a headless profligate in evening dress, carrying his own head under his arm like St. Denis; he is smutty, fearful, ominous, but still flirting.

As in "Death's Dance" of the Middle Ages, as in pictures painted by Holbein and all the mystics who represented Passion, Sin, and Punishment, so in Rops' works, there are plenty of symbolic skeletons. And as *les extrémités se touchent*, as death and life unite, the same in Rops' drawings, besides delight there grows the flower of suffering, the kiss resembles a bite, ecstasy of love changes into agony, while the nuptial bed is similar to a bier. In Rops' works delight laughs not; it cries and sobs; it is a torture and a curse. Rops was right to say, while showing one of his etchings, "*N'est ce pas que le côté érotique disparaît?*" In his drawings the unbridled spirit of lust is almost spiritual. Rops represents not the animal satisfying its impulses, but the soul that suffers and desires the ideal.

According to Rops' monkish point of view, earthly love is a punishment, woman is a plague. Being in the perpetual slavery of Satan, she serves his might, and for him she drags into perdition man; *ad majorem satani gloriam*, she causes to perish divine and pure love.

Rops hates woman with a hatred that is still

an admiration ; he thinks and dreams of her constantly ; his imagination is crowded with strong, passionate but thoughtless women, in whom unbridled passion is united with delicate and subtle beauty, who distribute mad mortal caresses without feeling, caresses that torture and delight. The women of whom he dreams are aphrodisiacal butterflies, creations of love and death. At their head is *Dame au Cochon*—*πορνομανής*—who, blind and destitute of will, is conducted by a fat and stupid pig. Here is the description of it : along a marble cornice walks a red-haired woman ; she is supple, strong, and elegant ; she is nude with the exception of long stockings, elegant slippers, and a big hat. She walks preceded by a pig led on a pink ribbon like a dog. The creature sees nothing, for her eyes are bound, and she allows herself to be conducted by a vile beast ; she walks softly ; she seems to sneak along like a bad, alluring thought, while little cupids—symbolizing true love—run away timidly and bashfully.

Rops' women are unique in art : they are neither related to classical Bacchantes drunk with passion and wine, nor to Gustave Moreau's goddesses and virgins holding flowers of the lotus in their hands. They are different : their birthplace is the low regions ; their caresses are sterile and dangerous ; they are a source of regret, pain, madness, and shame.

Among Rops' etchings and lithographs there are many taken directly from the Catholic demonology. It seems that in Rops' body there was the spirit of penitence of the exorcists, of frightened monks



muttering with pale lips, *vade retro sathanas*, when they were tempted, and ringing bells when their souls grew weaker and their bodies demanded their rights. *Memento mori* was sufficient philosophy for them. They lived in order to die. Their thoughts and beliefs are paraphrased by Rops' many *clichés*, perchance the most eloquent of them being *Mors et vita*.

In a coffin covered with a shroud lies she—woman: youth, beauty, life. Over her bends caressingly Death, plunging its claws in the white bosom and pressing its bony mouth to the lovely body.

Life and Death characterize the work of Rops, who searched everywhere for the contrasts of beginning and end, for alternatives of bliss and torturing, for the alliance of joy and penitence, for the mixture of lust and madness, and for the logical consequence of incurable longing.

In the evil, so much spread in the world, he sees the works of Satan, the lord of the black regiments, the ruler of the inferior regions. Rops, like Barbey d'Aurevilly, believes in the devil, so much so that the preface to the latter's *Diaboliques* could serve as an introduction to Rops' demoniacal-sensuous works.

In that preface that "Christian moralist," as Barbey d'Aurevilly calls himself, says that he believes in Satan and his influence over the world; he laughs not at his might, but tells about his cunning temptations in order to warn and frighten pure souls.

Rops' belief is similar.

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Rops was conscious and proud of his importance as an artist; he knew that he was one of the very few masters of the nineteenth century who understood and knew how to reproduce the human body in all its truth and riches, as well as how to express plastically fear, sorrow, and pain of the human soul, and, knowing his value, he disdained those who would have his works locked up because they think they are immoral and indecent.

In a princely motto, *aultre estre ne veulx*, he shut up, so to speak, his soul as in an ivory tower, and found in it consolation for the long years of neglect. From his works, as well as from his sharp, deep, brilliant, and witty letters, there comes forth the same independent pride, the same indifference for the easy applause of the people, the same contempt for the success with art dealers, as well as the appreciation of academical Pundits.

Rops left six hundred etchings and three hundred lithographs, which, together with *états*—sometimes there are three or four *états* of the same *cliché* before the final impression—represent a great work, such as but few artists have given to the world.

It should be added that some *vernissés* are as finished as are the pictures of Mieris or Callot's etchings. Only through a magnifying-glass can one see a host of elegant details, of elaborately executed faces and figures of perfect shape and great finish. However, the details are always dominated by the whole, the idea conquers the matter.

Rops' etchings executed in grey tones have seldom those light contrasts which the etchings of Rembrandt and Goya possess. They are subtle but

simple ; the drawing is sure, clear, and one might say classical. He searched not for violent effects of light, but created quiet and charming harmony ; the black tones are full of variety of shades, from very thick to half tones of transparent *crêpe* ; the balance of light and shade is unusually beautiful and pleasing.

At first Rops' needle cut the background of the *cliché* ; later that hard tool became soft, almost like a brush, preserving, however, the vigour and the strength of the drawing, the purity and assurance of the line. His technique is in the meanwhile simple and refined as that of a painter, for his *clichés* seem to be imbued with colours, while the precision of the shape permits a comparison with the work of a sculptor.

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Felicien Rops was a great poet, deep and prolific, sensuous and mystic, as well as a great moralist, for he has demonstrated that round the corner of profligacy there is madness, that at the bottom of delight there lies pain, and that immoderate pleasures of body are followed by satiety and regret.



**ARNOLD BOECKLIN**



## ARNOLD BOECKLIN

ART is the most sincere and most direct expression of the human soul. But that soul embraces such a gigantic world of phenomena, such a fathomless sea of mysteries, such an entanglement of immeasurable and sometimes contradictory manifestations of life, such a medley of brutal and subtle sentiments, emotions, and ideas, that artistic criticism is unable to find a real connection between a work of art and the soul of its creator. To find this connection is the task of the theory of art; but in attempting it not only learned systems of æsthetic but also those temporary watchwords which describe the narrow tendencies of certain schools in art are usually taken to pieces.

The mutual relations and inter-dependence even of a few simple and essential manifestations of the soul, such as thought, sentiment, and imagination, produce such a complexity of phenomena that all the resources of the different branches of art would be necessary to reproduce them. But these elementary psychological phenomena possess so many shades produced by the influence of the infinitely varied play of external life on the states of the artist's mind that it is impossible to explain them by anything which can be considered a standard measure of human deeds.

Hence the difficulty and even the absurdity of criticism, which looks on a work of art not as a conscientious student would look on a phenomenon unknown to him, but as a judge with lucid paragraphs which he applies to it, whereas it is in reality the result of the effort of a soul quivering with unrestrained desire to express itself entirely, and thus it stands in opposition to the surrounding life of soul as well as to the moral and material conditions of the existence of the bulk of mankind.

A critic is in the same position in relation to art as a poet or an artist is in relation to life, to Nature. The subject of his investigation is changed, but the means and the results are the same. If the soul of a critic is so rich as to give the impression of an unexhausted source, if he be a deep thinker whose capacity of creating ideas is boundless as the ocean, if he be a man in the highest degree honest, in whom there are united a childish simplicity and frankness with great learning, experience, and good taste, let such a critic write; for should he not create a scientific theory of art, which is impossible, he will arouse enthusiasm for it, as did Ruskin, and his work will be good literature. Such is one *raison d'être* of criticism. Another is the accumulation of facts and anecdotes concerning the life of artists, or the conscientious cataloguing of works of art.

Not feeling strong or infatuated enough to put myself into the first category of critics, I propose to follow in this study the modest task of the second kind of writers, and to relate what I have gathered about one of the greatest, perchance the



greatest, of German artists, Arnold Boecklin, who, notwithstanding the fact that so much has been written in the land of Lessing, was unknown to the people at large until he was well over sixty, and was never recognized at all by official Germany.

The Pan-German genius, with which, in literature, philosophy, and discoveries only the Greeks can compete ; whose music, as represented by Bach and Beethoven, has never been surpassed ; that genius, to which the French are superior only in Cuvier, the Spaniards in Columbus, and the Poles in Copernicus, having always been beaten by Latin genius in the field of art, has in Boecklin at length found a worthy champion. In him German art has a great representative, whom the Germans admire as the greatest poet-painter among them. He has succeeded in what Goethe strove in vain to accomplish : he has grafted the German soul upon the antique ideal of beauty. On a charming afternoon, on a certain summer day, he perceived old Pan, and through the medium of his glaring colours, he has restored to the Germans that which they had lost : their feeling for the universe and for infinity.

Thus proudly spoke Ola Hanson of Boecklin. Unfortunately for the Germans, Nietzsche says that Boecklin was not a German at all, but a Swiss ; and he exclaims : " What poet had Germany to equal the Swiss Keller ? Has there ever been a student like Jacob Burkhardt ? Or a path-finding painter like Boecklin ? " Over the first of these questions the Germans can shrug their shoulders ; they can

answer the second, but over the third they would be obliged to drop their heads.

Since that eloquent outburst of Ola Hanson, there has appeared so much rich material about Boecklin that perhaps there is not another contemporary artist of whom more has been written. From these materials one may learn all about Boecklin's life—full as it was of hard struggles; about his artistic principles and aims, about the secret of his technique and his workmanship; and the conclusion to which one comes is that there has not been in Germany any painter whose activity was surer, who was greater in natural artistic gift, in incessant effort, or in harmony and colouring.

A modern man of culture associates Boecklin's name with something great, surpassing the ordinary measure of things to which people are accustomed. Boecklin is a phenomenon, admired by all those who are able to understand him; he astonishes us by the primitiveness of his nature, which resembles that of mythical people, and by his spiritual culture, which places him amongst the most eminent men of the nineteenth century.

Boecklin's artistic spirit bore no marks of the narrow-minded, petty surroundings of the commercial city of Basel, where the supreme ideals of everybody, even of his own father, lay in a certain *bourgeois* capacity and commercial honesty, blended with a slight tendency towards pietism, manifested by external religiousness, an atmosphere by no means artistic. In that uncultured town, uncultured in spite of its university adorned with many portraits painted by Holbein, Boecklin was born

on October 16, 1827. His father, like his ancestors, who came to Basel in the seventeenth century from the Canton Schaffhausen, was a weaver, and naturally in his father's house Boecklin did not find much artistic stimulus or tradition. In the circle in which his parents lived an artist was looked upon as a vagabond, although there was a certain amount of interest for art on account of an uncle who was a house painter.

Arnold Boecklin spent five years in the college of his native town, and although he did not make enough progress in Greek to understand Homer in the original text, he read him again and again in translation, and this had a great influence on his art, as may be seen in the many pictures for which he chose Greek subjects. His first artistic notions he got from two sources: he frequented a public art school, and he often visited the hall of Basel University, where many of Holbein's pictures are to be found. But when he made up his mind to become a painter, and said so to his father, he found in him a stubborn opposition, expressed in the following words: "There are already enough hungry painters, and I am sure you will not become another Calame." And he was right there, for Arnold Boecklin became a greater artist than the Swiss landscape painter, whose academic pathos was then very much admired. Arnold's mother came to his rescue, and the old weaver was obliged to give in and to consent to his son becoming an artist. So in 1845 he was sent to the Düsseldorf Academy, the nearest place where he could get an artistic education. There he was put under the

direction of the historical painter, Ferdinand Theodor Hildebrandt. He was fortunately rescued from his influence by the landscape painter, J. Wilhelm Schirmer, in whose class he studied very diligently. His early studies, preserved in Munich, show astonishingly minute reproductions of plants and trees, of which he painted every leaf and blade until he gradually succeeded in accustoming his eyes to look at landscape as a whole. From his youth up he learned how to live with Nature, how to read her secret book, which not every one can understand. But the mere faithful and minute reproduction of Nature, no matter how conscientious it may be, does not make an artist, and Boecklin's first efforts did not announce his future greatness. At most, one can find in them the elements of that gloomy, romantic tendency which became one of Boecklin's foremost characteristics.

After a year of diligent work, Boecklin returned to Basel, but soon left it with his friend, Rudolf Keller, a painter also, and went to Brussels, where, however, he did not find "any pretty landscapes," and went on to Antwerp. In that city, so full of reminiscences of the broad life of Rubens, he remained but a short time, and then went to Switzerland.

In September, 1847, he found himself in Genoa, in the studio of Alexander Calame, but, tired of making lithographs for that master, left him after three weeks of hard work, so that Calame could not claim him as his pupil. This time Boecklin was very strongly attracted to Paris, and in 1848, not-

withstanding his father's opposition and his very limited means of subsistence, he went with Keller to the *cit  de la lumi re*. It would be difficult to state how much this sojourn in Paris influenced Boecklin artistically, but it is certain that it contributed much to free the young man from the narrow-mindedness of the small *bourgeois* prejudices amidst which he was brought up.

Boecklin and Keller hired a small room, No. 29, rue Verneuil, where they slept in one bed. As they had very little money, they could not enter any school; so they determined to copy diligently the old masters in the public galleries and to draw from models in the room of a certain M. Suisse, who himself had been model to J. L. David. Suisse did not pose as a professor; he furnished the future artists simply with a model and a room, and, in truth, such a way of studying is better than the training got from a mediocre and small-hearted teacher. From early in the morning till noon the two friends would draw from the models; in the afternoon they would copy in the Louvre, draw again in the evening, and then dine for half a franc each! It seems that Corot and Jules Dupr  pleased Boecklin the most.

The February revolution broke out, and when the mob stormed the Louvre the two friends, who happened to be present, were carried by the wave of revolutionaries into the palace, and afterwards were pushed to the Hotel de Ville, where they heard the speeches of Louis Blanc and Lamartine. Such was the part Boecklin took in the French Revolution in 1848. After three months of hardship in

Paris he returned to Basel, where he remained for some years painting portraits and landscapes, which then began to show that he was one of the greatest colourists ever born.

About that time Boecklin's love troubles began. He first fell in love with the daughter of a trunk maker, but she got inflammation of the brain and died. In 1852 he became enamoured of the daughter of a well-to-do Basel burgher, but the girl refused to marry a penniless painter. This circumstance, it seems, prompted him to leave Basel and go to Italy, where he was more fortunate in his wooing and soon married a young Roman girl, Angelo Lorenza Pascucci, who was remarkably beautiful, brought him a small dowry, together with good luck, and remained his true and staunch friend throughout his whole life, which is more than the majority of husbands can say. She took care of his finances and of his bad health, and but for her probably the artistic world would never have heard of Boecklin. She bore him fourteen children, of whom six only are alive.

But the misfortune was, as he said himself, that his wife had the ideas of the ancient Roman matrons and would not permit any female model in the studio. Without a model he could not paint, and had he insisted on having a model, there would have been trouble in store for him. As he deeply loved and respected his wife, he was obliged to act according to her Roman way of thinking, but suffered much when the critics pointed out that his pictures were defective for want of a model. This circumstance was the origin of Boecklin's theory,

which he applied to his art, that a picture should not be a slavish copy of Nature, which should be consulted only in regard to certain forms, in case of doubt, and that the best plan for a painter was to have a model in the next room to his studio and assure himself every time he needed it about the form and effect. A great man can use even a drawback to his advantage.

In 1856 Boecklin sent to an exhibition in Rome a picture representing a pompous landscape and a faun dragging a nymph across the river. The censor ordered the canvas to be thrown into the Piazza del Popolo. One should not forget that this happened in Rome, and that Boecklin was a Protestant, who won for his wife a Catholic girl, on which account there was so much irritation against him that his wife was warned by a priest that her husband's liberty and even his life were in danger. The result of all this was that Boecklin returned to Basel, where his genius took full flight, breaking away from all academic and conventional rules. Fortune did not, however, yet favour him. When he exhibited a picture representing a nude girl at a spring, there was such indignation amongst the Basel Philistines that his narrow-minded and uneducated father not only drove him from the house, but went round to the tradesmen and told them not to give him credit. The painter's position was very hard indeed, but just then came a proposal from a rich man in Hanover to paint his dining-room. The fee was not large, but for a half-starved artist it was almost salvation; so he accepted the commission, went to Hanover, and in

four months had finished five enormous decorative panels, for which he did not make any sketches, but painted everything directly out of his head. After many difficulties in lawsuits to get his money, he went to Munich, where his misfortunes reached the culminating point—for he caught typhoid fever, but where he also met his future patrons, Baron Schack and Count Kalckreuth, the latter of whom was director of the art schools in Weimar. Both those noblemen helped Boecklin out of his difficulties; the Count offered him the post of professor in the new art school, while the Baron gave him a commission to paint some pictures for his gallery. The artist accepted both propositions. For the Schack gallery he painted several pictures, amongst which was the masterpiece called "Pan chasing a Deer." It is true that Baron Schack did not pay much for his pictures. He gave Lenbach only 1,000 Bavarian guldens a year, for which sum the painter was bound to give to the Baron every picture he painted during that year. Lenbach was satisfied all the same, saying that "Baron Schack had one good quality, viz., he paid—not much, but he did pay—while nobody else cared whether such men as Feuerbach, Schwind, or Boecklin made pictures and statues or broke stones."

Franz Lenbach and Reinhold Begas were also among the professors in the school of art at Weimar, and Boecklin became friendly with them, especially with the latter, between whose art and that of Boecklin there is some affinity. But notwithstanding this friendly artistic intercourse, the academic limitations did not please Boecklin:



Weimar, notwithstanding its great literary tradition, was a nest of Philistines to Boecklin, and he left it in 1862, for, as he wrote to a friend, "service is an unpleasant word." All the same, the two years spent in Goethe's country were rich in artistic experience and results for Boecklin, for it was there that he painted his large picture "Diana the Huntress." This work, when it was exhibited in Basel, so much pleased a rich manufacturer from North Germany that he wished to purchase it, on one condition, that Boecklin would take out the goddess, for he wanted to have only the woods, without any living being in them. Boecklin, although it was only a question of an hour's work, and he badly needed money, declined to make such a concession. Boecklin's second sojourn in Rome from 1863 to 1866 was so full of trouble and worry that he did no good work there. Then he painted "The Villa by the Sea," which became very popular throughout Germany on account of the quality which the Germans call *Stimmung*, and secured him a commission from his townsfolk to decorate the staircase of the Basel Museum. So he returned to Basel again, where he spent five years and painted many masterpieces.

In 1871 he found himself again in Munich, where he stayed three years and enjoyed life without any sorrow and worry, for his skill now became widely recognized and he was paid as much as 60,000 marks for a picture. It was the first time Boecklin had possessed or seen so much money. In the capital of Bavaria his negative relations with Richard Wagner began. The poet-composer wished

Boecklin to paint the scenery for the *Ring des Niebelungen*, for which a sketch was made, but that was all. Boecklin's ideas about music were limited to Bach, Handel, Glück, Mozart, and Beethoven, and consequently he did not think much of Wagner. Wagner, on his side, however, admired Boecklin's work, and when he thought over the scenery of his opera, exclaimed, "It must be done by Boecklin! He alone possesses the right fancy for it." But there was the question about the method of execution; Boecklin insisted that it was artistically impossible, and that is why they did not collaborate. What a pity!

There is a story told about Wagner and Boecklin, who was asked to come to Naples to meet the composer. He went on a burning hot day; he was sunburnt and thirsty; but instead of some refreshment he was offered music, and so much of it that the painter was bored; the composer noticed it, and said:—

"Ah! you do not understand music much."

"As much as you understand art," rejoined Boecklin, and leaving Wagner rushed to the nearest *cabaret* to quench his thirst.

Those two remarkable men were both strong individualities, but of such widely different characters that they could not help clashing; besides, their ideas on art were very different. Boecklin, who kept his art within certain boundaries, was against the idea of the "united work of art"; his pictures are music of colours, but he could not make pictures for music; he was a poet in the depth of his soul, but to him the art of poetry was different from the

art of painting, and he was unwilling to waste his work where he thought an idea could not be painted. For this reason he refused a commission to paint a picture for a Roman lady, who wished him to paint a hearse followed only by two little children; she thought that such a tragical scene, placed in a grandiose landscape, was worthy of the brush of a great painter. She was mistaken, for Boecklin insisted that if a picture was to represent an idea, it must be the result of long thinking and not of a suggestion.

The influence of Italy is very palpable in Boecklin's pictures; he plunged into light and became intoxicated with the charm of southern air and sun, and even while living under the grey sky of Switzerland he reproduced the sapphire of the sky of Italy and the deep blue of the Mediterranean. His "Muse of Anacreon" resounds with merry songs, and through the humid eye and sweet smile of a charming girl commands that everything should be forgotten. It is as though she were shouting to us, with the Romans, *Carpe diem!* His fancy, loaded with classical reminiscences, threw on to the canvas: "The Fight of Centaurs," "Klio on the Throne of Clouds," "Fauns," "Pan," "Flora," in which, as in many other of his pictures, he has proved that he was not a painter of mannerisms, of routine, and school, repeating the same formula that made him popular, like most artists, but a strong individuality, always fresh and continually changing. The richness of his conception is amazing, the variety of his sentiments and emotions is inexhaustible, and that richness and

that universality made him the most interesting and most original painter of modern times. My limits of space do not allow me to dwell upon even his most remarkable pictures, such as "The Holy Grove," "In the Mirror of the Well," "Veritas," "A Summer Day," "The Isle of the Dead," "The Isle of the Life," "Faun admiring a Nymph," "The Playing Naiads," "Hymn of the Spring," etc., in which the great qualities necessary for a masterpiece are united in the highest degree.

Boecklin painted almost till the last moments of his laborious life, and produced an amazing number of pictures, which are scattered all over the world in public and private galleries. Nevertheless, he will never become popular, for his pictures are lacking in stories illustrating the current sentiments and thoughts of the multitude. But for every one who has attained that high culture which enables him to receive impressions from Nature and art, without any respect for practical value, for such a man Boecklin is one of the greatest artists that ever lived.

Boecklin's was a problematic, isolated, and broad individuality, so rich that it shines forth in a hundred manifestations, each different from the other. He expressed his fancy and his strange poetic feeling by colours, and he was such a colourist that it would be difficult to find any one in the history of painting who could equal him, except, perhaps, Giorgione, the painter who first created the pure Italian landscape and holds the place of honour among the best Italian colourists.

I have enumerated the most important facts of

Boecklin's career, but his true life can be read in his pictures. To-day the whole civilized world admires him ; to-day we realize that we have lost an extraordinary man. But formerly it was quite different—the same Boecklin was laughed at and called a madman. His soul, however, was endowed with extraordinary strength, for, notwithstanding the sorrows and struggles of his life, he marched forward with serene mind, listening to the song full of colours and light, looking to the ideal of his immortal art, which he loved more than his life. And art was the only thing that did not disappoint him during his life, and, for the love he had for it and for his hard work, it awarded him the place of immortality.

There were but few people at Arnold Boecklin's funeral, which took place in January of 1901, in the cemetery of Altori, near Florence, where the great artist rests after the fierce battle of life, in which he tasted every bitterness, but came out conqueror. He died as he had lived. A few days before his death he dreamed that he was one of Homer's heroes ; he rushed from his bed and recited some verses from the "Iliad."

The coffin was brought to the cemetery about five o'clock. The sun hid behind the cypress-trees ; a soft darkness enveloped Nature. The remains of the great man were placed in an ordinary grave, like that of a simple soldier killed on the battlefield. The sky in the west was a glory of pale gold, a gentle wind stirring the trees.

Who knows? Perhaps in that moment all the charming nymphs and naiads, shaggy Centaurs and

Pans had come to the cemetery in order to brighten with their spring-like laughter the last earthly moments of the man who had depicted them in such a masterly manner, and whose great and good soul was passing across the mysterious sea to rest and eternal happiness in the "Isle of Death."

**RICHARD STRAUSS**





## RICHARD STRAUSS

THE neo-romanticism introduced into literature by Maeterlinck towards the end of the nineteenth century was an interesting although but transitory movement. Its merits consists not in efforts to create new work, but to bring out from oblivion what was old and neglected, as the exuberance of the Elizabethan Renaissance, the adventurous dissolution of the Roccoco period ; and even to follow Wagner in the field of mystical, mediæval legends. It was due to neo-romanticism that the forgotten works of such romantics as Wackenroder, Hölderlin, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Novalis were republished and interesting commentaries written. That revival produced a new turn both in life and art, consisting in longing for fresh values of sentiment, in turning away from the *terre-à-terre* real existence, in desire for solitude, in escaping into an ideal world, in searching for *stimmung*, in yearning for the metaphysical states and mystical extasies. Life and art assumed—with some people, limited in number—a visionary aspect governed by mysterious laws ; the poetry of that generation was characterized by gloom, by dusky atmosphere, and by indefinite states of soul, full of obscure presentiments. The purpose of impressionistic art was to produce a soft, sentimental

atmosphere, pregnant with strange charm that was obtained not by sharp outlines, but by the medium of indistinctness of contours and subtle colouring of delicate shades ; a picture enwrapped in unseizable mist seemed to open remote vistas into the world beyond and to rouse visions. From that fount music has taken a strange turn of expression. Like modern art, modern music wishing to produce fresh sentimental and atmospheric *stimmung* was obliged to emphasize the sounds in order to create an antithesis to the music of the past, based on simple, clearly determined melodious lines ; instead of the former musical plasticity, there was substituted musical impressionism ; music became an intimate, internal art, the purpose of which was not to be under exterior influences and to reproduce exterior life, but to take its essence from the most intimate, subjective, impressions and sentiments, to change into sounds the mysterious shivers of the soul.

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When Richard Strauss began to produce his musical dramas, about which the discussions, if not as violent were as animated as were thirty years ago those concerning Wagner, one of the favourite objections raised against his art was that Strauss was not a thorough dramatist. This was but a bold paradox if one takes into consideration that he is now the foremost representative of musical drama. However, if one thinks earnestly, one finds that this paradoxical criticism is only apparently such and that it has its *raison d'être*, for Strauss'

dramatic creativeness grew from symphony and is its last consequence ; it would be almost impossible to comprehend Strauss as a musical dramatist without his orchestral symphonic creative power. At the beginning of his career, Strauss, being a pupil of Brahms, kept away from the progressive stream represented by Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, and it was due to Alexander Ritter, an enthusiastic admirer of the new music, which found its supreme expression in Wagner, that Strauss fundamentally changed his æsthetico-musical taste, became an ardent partisan of progress, and a radical representative of modernism. Strauss connected directly his creativeness with Berlioz's and Liszt's tendency for programme music. According to a previous conception music was regarded as a form, acting through its architectonical sensuous sounds expressive of melodious plasticity ; Berlioz and Liszt considered sounds to be only a means of expression of the spiritual world, and, being conscious of this, they made a strenuous effort to set forth faithfully a preconceived programme by painting psychological states with musical sounds. Then Liszt introduced, instead of the former schematic form of sonata that limited the free flight of imagination, a new musical form which he called *symphonische dichtung*, fusing individual instrumental passages into one *stimmungsbild*. Strauss took up that form, developed and transformed it according to his own taste, and in that manner produced something individual and new. The change and improvement consisted in this : in Liszt's *symphonische dichtung* prevails the homophonious style, its construction is

simple and not very coherent—sometimes even quite loose—and the orchestral colouring is modest and limited; Strauss changed homophony into polyphony, dazzling with hitherto unknown richness of musical colours, that are organically united and psychologically justified: cold melodies, full of flight and passionate conflagration of tunes, flow in a broad stream, unite one with another, penetrate each other, and fuse into the polyphonic whole, striking one with an implacable and irresistible logic and an element-like strength of expression. The construction of these melodies grows out from the sentimental contents of music and unites itself with the general expression and character of the work; sometimes there prevail short, concentrated motives that change continually into new forms; then broad and full themes of free rhythms pulsating with life. Every melodious theme of Strauss' music possesses a characteristic colour of sounds and all these colour-sounds he unites in one whole of *stimmung*, shining with extraordinary lustre. He possesses a rich scale of hue-sounds, which he uses not to produce unexpected effects, but as a means of creating subtle atmosphere and for expressing sentiments and impressions. His other means for depicting psychological states is a harmony of dissonances, and whilst striving to produce certain characteristics, he does not disdain glaring effects of cacophony, which often is a negation of all the rules of harmony. One could say rightly that Strauss' principle is that beauty should be sacrificed for the sake of psychological expression, as according to him the sphere of æsthetics

comprehends both the notion of beauty and the conception of ugliness ; consequently ugliness being an individual æsthetic factor, it should have equal rights with the beautiful. Then Strauss depicts the smallest details with great realism ; only it must be stated in his favour, that whilst accentuating paltry motives, he also bears in mind the whole ; he embraces in a sure movement the entire *stimmung*, and, avoiding the danger of too long, water-like tunes, he encompasses the thought and the essence of the work in well concentrated form—hence that broadness of his compositions that characterizes his performances.

Having mastered to perfection all the means of musical technique, he bent them for the purpose of musical characterisation and gave them such a faculty of reproducing the most complex psychological states and manifestations, that his symphonic poems are lacking only in poetical words and exterior actions to be real dramas. From this one sees that it was the consequence of logical progress that Strauss turned from symphony to drama. His dramatic activity, encompassing more and more problems, follows almost a straight road on which one sees the principal halting-places indicating, in a chronological order, the evolution of his work.

In order to appreciate his dramatic creativeness one should bear in mind that before Strauss has produced his dramatic work in such a symphony as "Aus Italien," and in such symphonic poems as "Macbeth," "Don Juan," and "Tod und Verklärung," he has created an individual instrumental style and form proper for them. Notwithstanding that, his

drama "Guntram," produced at Weimar in 1894, shows both in poetical conception and in musical technique, not only Wagner's strong influence, but even far-reaching Wagnerian reminiscences. The hero of the drama, Guntram, belongs to a mystico-religious order, the purpose of which is to rouse in human hearts the sentiment of charity through the means of music and singing. In order to accomplish his exalted mission, namely, to preach our Saviour's supreme commandment through inspired songs, Guntram goes into the world and comes to a country oppressed by a heartless tyrant. Here he begins to act by saving the life of the Princess Freihilda, the wife of the tyrant, who, being unable to bear any longer his cruelties, jumps into a river. The Prince, considering himself insulted by Guntram's remarks, rushes at him with his sword, but the Knight, whilst defending his own life, wounds mortally his adversary, through which he violated one of the rules of his order. Whilst lingering in prison he has time to enter into the depth of his heart and to find there the motives for his action. At the first glance it looks as if he had acted in order to free the people and the Princess from the tyranny of the Prince, but on a closer examination of his conscience he finds that he behaved as he did through sinful love for Freihilda. Having become conscious of his guilt, he imposes on himself a punishment which consists in giving up his innamorata and in remaining for life in solitary confinement.

This short synopsis of the drama shows Wagner's evident influence, which is clear even in this that

Strauss composed the words himself, as Wagner used to do, and clothed the poetical contents with poetical music. Then that symbolical order of the apostles of mercy reminds one very much of the Knights of the Holy Grail from "Parsifal" and "Lohengrin," not to speak of the exterior atmosphere of Strauss' drama, the action of which takes place in the thirteenth century as does that of "Tannhäuser." The analogy between Strauss and Wagner is still closer, for when Guntram analyses his conscience in prison, there happens nothing on the stage and the whole dramatic action assumes a purely interior, psychological character, which process of the soul reminds one much of "Tristan." Even the Wagnerian notion of *das Erlösungsmotiv* is found in "Guntram," for the hero frees himself through his determination to give up Freihilda's love, and also when he sacrifices her passionate sentiment for the tranquility of his own conscience, consequently his own happiness, and as satisfaction for his guilt. Then, when one analyses Strauss' music composed for "Guntram," one finds much that reminds of Wagner's style displayed in "Lohengrin" and "Parsifal." In order to produce the mystical, mediæval atmosphere, Strauss uses Wagnerian instrumental means. And when one passes from general remarks to particular episodes, then one detects that one of them, namely, when Guntram is leaving the quiet life of his order for the turbulent activity of the world and listens alone in a forest to the mysterious rustling of the wind and to the melodious singing of the birds, that scene is almost like the famous "Waldweben"

from "Siegfried," in regard to situation and *stimmung*.

However, one must acknowledge that notwithstanding Wagner's evident influence and undeniable reminiscences from his work, there is in Strauss' drama an individual style consisting in refined instrumentation and orchestral colouring, and especially in the construction of melodious themes, which have peculiar character, quite different from Wagner's leit-motives, instead of which Strauss introduced many subjective tunes and original elements of high artistic value. In his symphonic works, especially in "Tod und Verklärung," Strauss delights his heart in proceeding by the smaller intervals or semitones of the scale, taken from Wagner; in "Guntram" he prefers to employ the regular intervals of the diatonic scale, the result of which are melodies full of freedom and simplicity, that are outlined individually. Then, in contrast to precise Wagnerian motives, Strauss' melodious themes possess broadly designed and magnificent lines, striking by their pathos. The assertion made at the beginning of this disquisition that Strauss' dramaticality grew from symphony, is proved especially by this, that he did not take into consideration the traditional stage requirement according to which the principal rôles have to be assigned to voices, but gave to the orchestra the preponderant dramatic action; the symphonic element holds an absolute sway over the whole work and often makes the dramatic impression quite feeble. This is the principal reason for which "Guntram" is no longer performed and even forgotten, notwithstanding its musical merit.



After the first exertion of strength for the purpose of ascertaining what he was capable of effecting in the province of drama, Strauss returned to symphony and composed "Heldenleben," "Zaratustra," "Don Quichot," and "Till Eulenspiegel," all symphonic dramas, through the means of which he ascended the height of his creative ability and made music the technical means that obeyed his slightest wish. Then he proceeded with his second play, which he called "Die Feuersnot," based on Ernst Wolzogen's text, for which the principal theme is taken from folk-lore. It was performed in 1901 at Dresden and became a source of contradictory appreciation if not of censure. The background of this play is the festive celebration on St. John's day, when bonfires are lit and dances performed round them by the populace. In Strauss' "Feuersnot" the action is at Munich, where in the crowd full of fun and frolic there is a stranger by the name of Kunrad der Ebener, a dreamer fond of solitude; stimulated by general hilarity, he also rushes into the whirlpool of amusement, pulls down his house, and kisses the beautiful Diemut, the burgomaster's daughter. The girl is offended by his daring, swears vengeance, and employs a stratagem for its accomplishment: she promises to pull him in a basket up to the window of her room when everybody goes to watch the bonfire; she keeps her promise, but half way the basket stops; the romantic admirer of the cunning girl hangs in space and becomes the laughing-stock of an enormous crowd called by the malicious wench. Kunrad, however, being endowed with a

magic power, throws a malediction which causes all the lights and bonfires to become suddenly extinguished. The crowd get frantic with fear, whilst Kunrad makes a speech to them in which he says that the house which he pulled down was formerly inhabited by Master Reichardt, whose great artistic gift was not appreciated by the inhabitants of Munich, and he was obliged to leave the town; his work will be continued by him—Kunrad—on condition that the love of a woman will make him happy; he loves Diemut and desires to be loved by her; when she gives herself to him then the lights and bonfires will blaze again. Diemut, pressed by the supplications of the crowd, pulls Kunrad up to her room, and lights appear in every house in the town.

The essential motive in this story is satire: Master Reichardt is Wagner, who was obliged to leave Munich because of the intriguing against him; Kunrad represents Strauss himself, who continues Wagner's work; the satire, throwing the action on the sensual background, parodies Wagner's notion of freedom through woman's love; for the purpose of characterizing Wagner, Strauss employed motives taken from "the Nibelungen"; and to mark with a peculiar stamp himself he used the melodies from "Guntram"; whilst the crowd is designated by popular songs.

In "Feuersnot," the music is free from Wagner's influence and is individual and original; the various artistic and popular motives are fused in one organic whole, purely Straussian, by the means of orchestral colouring; the singing parts are treated

here not as musical recitatives, but flow in broad streams of noble melodies. The last part, *Liebes-scene*, in the room of the fascinating Diemut, is full of erotic intoxication, and one could call it an individual symphonic poem encompassed by the frame of a drama. One would be justified in censuring the loose *morale* of the libretto and the distasteful self-glorification of the composer; but one must none the less admit that in "Feuersnot" Strauss did reveal himself an unrivalled lyricist, astonishing one by rich inventiveness, capable of being equal to any *stimmung*, and that he created music full of character, of temperament, and of life.

When in 1905 Strauss produced at Dresden "Salomé," the breach with Wagner became complete, for his style in this work is so individual that nobody could detect in it any Wagnerian influence or reminiscences. Using Oscar Wilde's work as libretto, Strauss avoided its inadequate interpretation through the music, disastrous to any poetical work, and one could say that he melted the poetic words into a beautiful harmony of sounds. Salomé was living in the criminal atmosphere of Herod's court at which her marvellous beauty shone, but she hated the orgies of sensual dissipation. During a feast in the palace she rushes out wishing to enjoy the charm of a quiet night, in which there resounded the strangely solemn singing of St. John the Baptist. His ascetic figure, contrasting with the dissolute courtiers, strikes her by its uplifting simplicity and rouses in her a burning desire to love and be loved.

Prompted by her sentiment she goes to him and offers her love to him. St. John, mindful of his exalted mission, declines with disdain her proposition; his resistance to her passionate desire reveals in her a tiger-like taste, for not being able to possess him alive, she determines to have him killed and hold him at least dead. When, after a bewitching dance Herod tells her that he is willing to do anything to please her, she asks for St. John's head, and when it is handed to her on a dish, she kisses it passionately. Herod, disgusted and frightened at such an outburst of salaciousness, orders his soldiers to crush her between their shields.

Strauss pointed that gloomy abyss of perversity and crime with appropriate musical colours, astonishing by the depth of psychological truth, for which he had a very favourable opportunity, to wit: a contrast between unbridled sensuality and mastered chastity, and the only censure one could apply to his performance would be, that he was more successful in depicting through the means of brilliant musical hues the decay of Oriental culture than the purity and vigour of rising Christian *morale* and ethics. There were some critics who objected to Strauss' fostering, by the means of music, the burning problem of sexual perversity, and their attitude should be upheld, for although it is true that *spiritus flat ubi vult*, and that consequently perhaps Strauss could not help that his spirit moved him to glorify that perversity, it does not follow that he should be praised for such performance, and that an æsthetic canon

concerning beauty to be found in ugliness should be deducted from his work. However, the most interesting for our purpose is this, that in "Salomé" Strauss displayed an unusual richness of technical means, which dazzle by their power of efficacy and are accumulated with a strange predilection. This astounding poetical technique is not Strauss' aim, but is given to the service of dramatic expression. There could not be a shade of doubt that the point of gravitation, so to say, of this drama remains with the orchestra, which was composed of such an unusual number of instruments—many of them newly invented, the old being insufficient for his purpose—that even Wagner would be astonished at its complicated and huge organism, as well as at the great skill of each musician. From that gigantic sea of sounds there came forth distinctly themes and motives, winding throughout the whole of the drama, changing again and again their instrumental raiments and displaying most varied changes of tunes and rhythms. The motives introduced by Strauss into "Salomé" are not melodies of themes, but harmonious effects of counterpoint, based on the polyphony of brilliant orchestral colouring. When one compares the musical motives of "Salomé" with those of "Guntram" and especially of "Feuersnot," one finds them short with strongly designed outlines, but melting into the mist of colouring of *stimmung*. The Straussian motives have nothing in common with the Wagnerian leit-motives; on the contrary, one notices that in "Salomé," Strauss has broken with the Wagnerian principle, which will remain genetically connected

with the general stream of modern music, being interwoven in it like a golden thread into a silken fabric. Strauss rejects schematic scaffolding built on leit-motives and considers them a remainder of the former architectural form of music, which he disdains; instead, he tries to paint in a general manner the psychological background of the work, thus avoiding all schematic limitation. It is true that Strauss does not give up entirely the motive, but he assigns to it a secondary position, without giving to it expressive melodious outlines as did Wagner. Thus there is in "Salomé" a motive that flows throughout the whole work like a broad melodious stream—it is that of St. John—or rather a solemn cantilene, full of simplicity and of Biblical pathos. Besides this there winds the prophetic motive, full of gravity and announcing the victory of faith. The contrast between St. John's motives and Salomé's singing is very striking, for in her motive there shivers the note of sensual passion that changes into demoniacal madness, and when she sings: *Ich will deinen mund küssen, Johanaan!* the drama reaches its culminating point of exposition. One cannot help noticing that there is a great likeness between Salomé's song and Tchaikovsky's motive in the A flat Trio, op. 50, but one could not state whether this reminiscence is conscious or not. To Salomé's dance is given a form of symphonic scherzo which constitutes in itself a complete dramatic poem, concentrating—like a prism—all the rays of the dramatic action. That dance, full of Oriental character, is a true orgy of the senses, expressing a mad crescendo of passionate desire and

magnified into unbridled frenzy. As a whole, "Salomé" is such a good work that one hesitates to say that its last part is the best; if it be not so, then at least it is certain that Strauss gathered here all his strength for a powerful flight, for which purpose he united all the motives winding throughout the drama in a polyphonic unity that shines with a thousand lights and reflexes, dazzling by the extraordinary richness of musical colours and fascinating by the charm of melodies. The former short and broken motives assume broad forms, flow like a mighty stream, and become the psychological expression of Salomé's sentiments, the music of her soul, the chords of that passionate music resounding with an unbridled orgy of desire and growing into a paroxysm of sensual delight.

"Salomé's music, restless, nervous, free of all architectonic of symmetry of classical compositions, conducted to the last consequence of psychological characterisation, does not hesitate to use any means, provided it finds a corresponding sound or tune for a poetical word, for its sentiment, for its thought and *stimmung*; hence that constant change of accords, pouring in the deluge of melodies, without clearly determined tunableness; hence that constant changing of rhythm and time. In order to express all his intentions, Strauss used technical means which are not to be found in his former works, and those means are harmonies of dissonances composed of four keys put beside each other, or even a unity of different keys, as for instance when Herodias is obliged to listen, full of power-

ful wrath, to St. John's thundering at her, then the orchestra conducts simultaneously melodies of two keys; then again, in order to paint the disgust at Salomé's kissing the dead man's head, Strauss employs, without the slightest hesitation, two scales running side by side in little tunes, which results in a gnashing disagreeable to the ear. This is a serious sin against the beautiful, and it could not be excused and justified on the plea that this technical means was necessary to paint in a realistic manner the disgusting *stimmung* of a monstrous moment, for realism should never be introduced into a work of art. Another censure applied to "Salomé" will be in regard to the overloading of the orchestra with instrumental effects, the result of which overloading is, that the voices of the singers are often drowned by the orchestra, which is easily done in a composition void of distinct outlines of melody, and having rather a character of dramatic recitation. One could state *intra parentesis*, that the parts composed by Strauss for the singers are very trying on account of his employing unusually long intervals and of effort of coming as near as possible to dissonances that vibrates in our speech.

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When "Salomé" was performed and appreciated it seemed that this drama would remain an exceptional example in musical literature, showing that one could not go further in the development of technique. However, Strauss astonished the world when he created "Electra," which is superior to



"Salomé" both on account of the might of dramatic force, the realism through the means of which he reproduced psychological states, and because of the bold use of technical means. In "Salomé" there are episodes repulsive by their perversity and frightening by their awe. In "Electra" there appears a powerful demoniacal world, over which rises the spectre of crime lightened by the glare of vengeance; its awe is still more powerful than in "Salomé," for it is increased by the mysterious anticipation of evil. That tragical atmosphere is reproduced by music with a masterly subtlety, every psychological moment being expressed by an appropriate and corresponding sound; there is a superior force that penetrates the whole of the drama and compels, through merciless necessity, the accomplishment of what destiny decreed. The music in "Electra" causes one to shiver, to tremble and produces the same impression, which the ancient Greeks must have felt, when in the Athenian theatre they witnessed the tragical visions of Sophocles and Æschylus that passed in their awe-stricken imagination.

Electra lives with the thought of vengeance; like a hunted beast, she shuns the people; in her soul there resound painfully the blows of the hatchet with which the depraved Clytemnestra—helped by her lover Egist—had murdered her husband, Agamemnon. The air in the King's palace is permeated with blood and filled with ghosts. Through the means of dissonances, rolling with unusual swiftness, the music paints that disgusting *stimmung*. The character of the hypocritical Electra, full of

hysterical demonism, is rendered by slippery, twisted musical motives, whilst for depicting the woe by which Clytemnestra is tormented and for characterizing her vicious soul and her moral sordidness, Strauss used musical means, which one does not find in "Salomé," these means being tearing and yelling dissonances, that result from the union of disharmonious tones or of two different keys employed simultaneously. In that atmosphere, depressing by its gloom and awe, there shines but one melodiously luminous motive characterizing Agamemnon's children and their love for their father; that happy motive could be likened to an oasis that charms one in the midst of the heartless and pitiless desert of human perversity. Electra wishes to avenge the death of her father by murdering Clytemnestra and Egist. Electra's only hope rests in her brother Orestes, who was sent away from the house by the mother; the false news was spread that Orestes was dead. The desperate Electra was now determined to perform the work of vengeance alone, and she digs out the hatchet with which her father was murdered. Maddened by revenge Electra digs more and more violently, and the music paints that episode with frightful force. The torturing doubt, rending Electra's heart, is suddenly brightened by a message that Orestes is alive: he comes to the palace in order to perform what his duty dictates to him. There rises in Electra's heart the hope of triumphing over her foe, and the same motive of minor mode, that was heard at the beginning of the drama to express the painful reminiscences of a kingly past, now

changes into the major mode to depict the joyful *stimmung* of hope of triumph. Orestes rushes into his mother's apartment to accomplish the dreadful deed of vengeance ; Electra, agitated by uncertainty and fear, listens to the faint voices coming from the interior of the palace, and, with bent head—like a beast of prey in a cage—mad with pain, rushes round the room. Now is played the drama of her soul, and orchestra blasts a mad instrumental combination, illustrating well Electra's psychological state. Orestes is victorious ! Joy, mingled with hatred, comes forth with unbridled power ; Electra performs a thanksgiving, hysterical dance ; intoxicated with happiness, exhausted by the triumph of accomplished vengeance, she falls on the floor to the accompaniment of frantic music.

In "Electra" Strauss reached such limits that a logical development on the same line would conduct him to the absolute negation of the essential foundation of music. This drama was the final expression of over-refinement and of the over-glare of technical means ; of the accumulation of orchestral effects and of instrumental colouring ; of elimination of melodious line and of replacing it exclusively by harmonic melody ; in a word, of trifling with everything musical and of giving it into the service of the dramatic and of the psychological at the expense of the beautiful.

If Strauss astonished the musical and the intellectual world when he produced "Electra," he surprised it still more when that gloomy drama, full of demoniacal awe, was followed by the effusion of his peculiar endowments manifested

in his last work: "Der Rosenkavalier." This wonderment is due to the fact, that in his last presentment he almost gives up his notions concerning the purpose of music, according to which notion music should be psychologico-intellectual and not sensuous. That notion he embodied in his many symphonic poems and symphonic dramas. Suddenly he left the demoniacal world and psychological abysses and returned to life, to simplicity, and to serenity.

The Prince von Wardenberg is a sportsman and prefers rather to hunt than to pay attention to his wife. She is left much alone, and during her long solitary hours arrives at the conclusion that life has not much charm without love, that her youth will soon pass away, and consequently loves the charming and well-born Octavian. When they are closeted for the purpose of exchanging their amorous *propos*, the Princess's cousin, the Baron Ochs auf Lerchenau, is announced. As Octavian cannot either escape unperceived or hide, he disguises himself as a chambermaid, which is easily done in the theatre, for the rôle is played by an actress. As the would-be *suivante* is very pretty, the Baron takes a fancy to her, notwithstanding that he came to announce to the Princess that he is going to marry a rich girl, by the name of Sophie von Fannival, a daughter of a freshly ennobled Viennese *bourgeois*, and asks his aunt to select a *rosenkavalier* from amongst her relations. The Princess names Octavian for the rôle and shows his portrait, which, naturally, bears a great likeness to the alleged chambermaid. When

Octavian meets Sophie von Fannival the mischievous Amor discharges his arrows at them and Hymen is going to light the torch in their honour, after the Baron's brutal treatment of the charming *bourgeoise* and after his duel with Octavian, who challenges him and wounds him.

All that is depicted by music, which although unmistakably Straussian, which means full of free and audacious polyphony and of the glitter of his unrivalled orchestration, possesses what not only great musical connoisseurs, but also the vast majority of cultured amateurs require from a musical performance, namely, a stirring of the emotions by sensuous beauty. That masterly comedy—the best work of Hugo von Hoffmansthal—ends by the re-appearance of the Princess, who, having learned the truth concerning her cousin, the Baron, as well as of the love between Octavian and Sophie, gives up her lover, and the play is ended by a most charming dialogue-duet between the two happy young people.

Strauss, being obliged to keep to the definiteness of the libretto—one of the best ever written—saved himself and his followers from the too glaring raptures of some of his symphonic poems and from the tiring prolixity that appears in all his works, thus producing a performance of silvery harmonies and enchanting melodies, of joyfulness and humour, of serenity and refinement, rich in melodic invention and in dramatic insight, all that resulting in a *stimmung* quite different from that one finds in his former compositions. His treatment of the voices in “Der Rosenkavalier” is almost as sympa-

thetic as Mozart's. And when one adds, that his trio towards the end of the last act may be justly compared with the ravishing *Così fan tutti*, then one is justified in rejoicing at Strauss having become a catholic in music.

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Such are the essential characteristics of Strauss' art, explained as well as the difficulty in depicting sounds through the medium of words permits, the other difficulties being the shortness of a disquisition and the impossibility of quoting music, which means alone would be a little more adequate than explaining all the peculiarities of style and technique in a work that is the most complicated in the history of music of all times.

It is almost impossible to state the cause of Strauss' astounding change, made suddenly, without any transition, nay, without a warning. The only reasonable surmise one could offer would be, that Strauss in his quality as a *Übermensch*—for such he certainly is—became conscious, before others, that we were given too much to philosophizing, to the analysis of our psychological states, instead of enjoying the beauty of form and the exquisiteness of technique. That consciousness prompted him to give up the gloom of the psychological abyss and to turn towards Palestrina's *Heiterkeit*. That he is on the right road is proved by this eloquent fact that his last work is the most remarkable of our generation, which again proves that a work born not from pure love for the beautiful, but from the vain personal desire of boasting

of exaggerated artificial combination, could not deserve to be called a work of art. That sin against artistic conscience is usually punished by the incomprehensibility of the work, for any obscure and puzzling presentment is a vital offence against the *beaux arts*. Beauty is a spiritual, infinite essence, clothed in form, sensualized, and that essence must be visible and easy to understand. It is the purpose of philosophy to plunge into the abyss of thoughts in order to bring into light truths concealed there; beauty could be likened unto one of Raphael's angels that look at one with their wondrous eyes and smile heavenly; but from that smile and from those eyes, with expression difficult to describe, speaks infinity.

When music is incomprehensible the composer commits a grave offence against that heavenly art and against the immortal element that rests within man; music is the province of the whole of mankind, as is conscience, sunlight, air, tears, love, joy, and pain. A mighty lord in cloth of gold, a miserable beggar in rags and tatters, a simple-minded or a wise man—everybody with a noble heart—has the same right to music given by God as one has to a patrimony. Music flows on earth from heaven, and the one who plunges his tired soul into its invigorating stream forgets the burning wrongs of life, forgives them that trespass against him, becomes as young as he was during his innocent age, finds himself again amidst the lost paradise of his sentiments where bloom the most beautiful blossoms of love, of faith, and of hope. To the one who listens to music it seems as if he were

surrounded by the winged choirs of the seraphim ; his soul becomes also winged and flies to the world of marvels. Over the miseries of sublunary existence there soars the angel of harmony ; he stands on the rainbow of the seven coloured tunes ; he binds the memories of the past and longings of the present ; he sings a lethean lullaby to those whose hearts smart because of severance of soul ; he alleviates the sharp adamant of Fate ; he inwreathes with amaranth gathered in God's garden everything and everybody that is hallowed on earth.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold :  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings  
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins—  
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.



**EDWARD MANET**



## EDWARD MANET

SHORTLY before death Ingres met Manet in some studio where he went probably to defend his ideals ; they did not know each other ; Manet was young and unknown. It is almost certain that the old Ingres did not suspect that that tall young man would carry such a weight in the evolution of French art, and that he also would fight all his life for his ideas, so different from those of Ingres, who was for the beautiful *quand même*, while Manet desired the truth, even if it were sometimes disagreeable and brutal. Both of them were reactionaries necessary in the transformation of æsthetic ideas.

After Ingres, the French art began to decline in academical studies as well as in traditions of the Renaissance, while romanticism changed into a kind of noisy and tedious guitar, sentimental and weepingly poetical.

The beautiful and dignified art of Ingres became a museum of wax figures. There was a hierarchy of themes ; the whole art was divided into classes. On the highest step stand historical and religious art—I should have said semi-religious, for it was not animated either by the faith of the Primitives, or the sweetness and charm of the Renaissance. Biblical and mythological subjects were also very

welcome ; there was a true invasion of Olympian gods and goddesses, of saintly women from the Bible painted in *negligés*, showing here a nude leg, there an uncovered bosom. As to landscape, it had the right of citizenship when it represented some foreign country with flora that one sees in strange lands, with sand carried by Samum, with water in which cloudless, smooth sky and dishevelled palm-trees, with leaves as if made of tin, were reflected. And before all it was forbidden under the penalty *laesae artis* to put in the pictures air and light. In such way Manet's professor, Thomas Couture, used to make his pictures, which were so classico-romantic that they made one yawn while looking at them. There was as much life and truth in all those pompous ceremonies and festivals, such for instance as "Decadence of Rome," as there is in an osteolite. And he, Thomas Couture, was going to teach Manet how to look on art, on the beautiful, and on Nature ! Manet already felt and understood that it was necessary to go with art on large thoroughfares, where one finds air and sun. A shock was unavoidable between them ; the stronger Couture wished to bend Manet's creative thoughts to his ideal the more the pupil resisted, and *eo ipso* the greater was the recoil in his work from the canons imposed on him. Soon Manet began to pull down the temple of "great art," to destroy its rules and by-laws, and fight those who were its followers and propagators.

In that way there was born realism as a reaction against cheap idealism.

Under the banner of Nature, having taken for

his motto "the truth," Edward Manet began to fight and to work. Already in his first pictures, although less important for a historiograph, for they are less characteristic and less original than those which followed, one can see qualities of the first importance, viz., solid technique and sure drawing. It is true that there is an evident influence of Goya and of Il Greco, together with slight reminiscences of Courbet, Raeburn, Franz Hals, and sometimes even of Couture, but those influences and reminiscences are a necessary result of youthful impressionability and enthusiasm. Every artist going on the road for the search of his own impressions, takes with him a certain amount of baggage composed of foreign penchants and likings.

Such a picture as "*Buveur d'absinthe*," painted in 1859, is a strong work, almost perfect technically, executed sincerely, and possessing very subtle psychology. That emaciated drunkard and penniless fellow, wrapped up fancifully in a cloak, is a perfect type of a Bohemian of those times; he is one of those Manfreds of the Latin quarter cafés, searching for the absolute at the bottom of a glass; one of those *déclassés*, who lost in drinking his health, his talent, and sometimes even a spark of genius, and who under the influence of Hamlet's "to be or not to be," leave the world, slamming contemptuously the door of life after him.

Manet, by simple means, without too much verbosity, has given the full pathos of such ruined existence that ended tragically by a bullet or a piece of rope. In the swollen faces, in the whole figure covered with rotten cloak, one sees the ironic

pride, cleverness, hopeless downfall, nights spent under the bridges of the Seine, and the whole misery that devours and ruins. And there is the evident cause of the defeat and of humiliation . . . absinthe — *la fée verte*, which not only made rags of clothes, not only turned the face to the colour of lead, but also, as its supreme triumph, has caused a shiver of *delirium tremens* in the emaciated Bohemian.

"Guitarero," painted in 1860, has the same qualities, but in a higher degree. The technique here is more simplified, and the relation of light and shade, as well as bold harmony make almost a masterpiece of that canvas. On a greenish bench, with metallic reflections, is sitting a Spanish guitar-player; under a broad-brimmed *sombrero*, there is a pink kerchief with which the head is wrapped up, contrasting delicately with the swarthy face; the black colours of the bolero, the white of the shirt, and grey trousers, constitute an unusually charming whole; while the expression of the face, ample modelling, transparency of the atmosphere are such that the picture seems to be cut from real life. There are no shades in that picture, there are no contrast of lights and shades, that are the last reminiscences of the art before Manet, in whose pictures the parts that are toned down have the intensity and worth of values, and they unite with lights in breezy and lively harmony.

In other pictures, painted in the light of a studio, such as "Balet espagnol," "Lola de Valence," "Olympia," and in numerous portraits there is a strong rise of the scale of colours and their immediate harmony without a transition to half-tones and

without attenuation. As those pictures were conceived in the cold light of a studio, they do not give the whole of Manet's might as a colourist.

Only in pictures executed in plain air does he come forth as an innovator with his own revelation. Although "Lola de Valence" with her dress sprinkled with variegated flowers, a white turban, and a blue kerchief has, as said Baudelaire, *le charme inattendu d'un bijou rose et noir*; although "Olympia" is the very type of all posterior nude studies, a bright and youthful tone, a protest against soap-like feminine bodies with false charms and calligraphic forms; although portraits of Zola, of Rochefort, of Eve Gonzales, and such pictures as "Le dame aux évantails," "Un café," "Bar aux Folies Bergères," "Le vieux mendiant," "Le liseur," and many others sufficed to make him famous and prompted one of his admirers to say over his grave: *ce génie sans cesse en quête d'un effort nouveau*; although in all his pictures there is individual feeling so different from accepted formulas, Manet's talent spouts with all its might, blossoms with all its originality there where the flowers, caressed by the sun, shine and scent, where the leaves and grass are green, where the sky is blue. To this class belong "Déjeuner sur l'herbe," "Le jardin," "Le linge," "Chez le père Lathuille," "Argenteuil," "Les travailleurs de la mer," "Le port de Bordeaux," "La maison de Rueil," etc.

Chronologically "Déjeuner sur l'herbe" was an important event in the history of art. "In that picture," said Theodore Duret in his remarkable work about Manet, "was manifested a kind of

painting that is beyond ordinary art and which comes forth from its own and original vision. Here the onlooker came into contact with a new artist, who against accepted rules put different colours beside each other, without any transition, an artist, overthrowing former combinations of light and shade, universally accepted in their stable contrast and replacing them by contrasts of changeable tones."

It is easy to understand how the eyes of the spectators, accustomed to dusky harmonies, attenuated by neutral shades in transition from one colour to another, were shocked by that bold unity of sincere colours in their full development and strength. The critics of those times called that kind of painting *bariolage*, and there began a fight about that picture which seemed to be a challenge, not only because of its colours and technique, but also on account of its composition and subject. On a large canvas, the dimension of which was considered until now proper only for allegories, historical scenes, or battles, Manet painted under trees two men in ordinary and natural positions that had nothing in common with heroism. They are dressed in ordinary, modern clothes that even from afar could not have been taken for chlamids. On the foreground a nude woman is squatting, another is seen in the water on the background; there are scattered women's clothes, a basket with fruits and rosy bread animate the scene with bright spots. The pale body on the background of green, contrasting with dark clothes, furnished a *motif* full of colour, which should have won admira-



tion by its beauty and not shocked by its daring, all the more that in the history of art there was an example of such a contrast in the most beautiful "Concerto" by Giorgione. But neither critics nor artists, and with them naturally the public, wished to see either logic in the theme or fresh charm coming forth from the picture.

Little by little Manet acquired more and more fame, *sui generis*; some people called him a buffoon, others a kind of Anti-Christ that destroyed everything, while still others qualified him simply as a madman. That renown accompanied him till his grave, for it is true that sometimes we are divided from new works by such a distance that only after many years we are able to understand them.

A kind of tragi-comical fate met Manet's work. The humorous periodicals of those days, such as *Tintamarre* and *Charivari*, laughed at him; as to the respectable publications, they either said nothing of Manet or exhorted him *ex cathedra* to be reasonable and to enter the road of virtue, of duty, and to paint with chicory; Baudelaire muttered something from time to time; Zola alone defended the reformer. Manet fought with the jury of the Salon to which he was not admitted; with the public to which *malgré tout et malgré tous* he appealed in special exhibitions of his work, with critics and comrades.

After years of fighting there began to shine for him, like the sun of March, a relative success, when in 1873 he exhibited the portrait of the etcher Belot, a masterpiece of the brush worthy of the best portraits of Franz Hals; but even then the

success was marred by bitterness, for they found in his work an affinity with the Dutch painter, while Manet wished not to be compared with anybody.

The painting called "Le bon bock" represents a fat man sitting at a table with a glass of beer, holding a pipe between his teeth, and satisfied with himself, with life and drink. The fact is that there is a relationship between Manet's man and Hals's beer-drinkers, but only in regard to type; the picture is individual and is one of the jewels of modern art.

After that applause, a year later, when Manet exhibited "Le chemin de fer," he met again with laughter—again he was not understood; it was clear then that he had not come one step near the public, or rather that the public had made not one step forward to understand Manet.

The year 1881 brought to the artist a rare consolation, for his two portraits, exhibited at the Salon, "Pertuiset tueur de lions" and "Rochefort," were awarded the second medal, which gave him a privilege to be *hors concours*, and to send his pictures to the Salon without fear of being rejected. Then he was decorated with the Legion of Honour.

Thanks to those two honours, or perchance more to the reason that sooner or later a true talent must come out victorious, there was a slight turn in Manet's favour, especially amongst critics and artists who began to appreciate his emancipated art, and there gathered round him a few men who were desirous to tell their thoughts in an individual and new way. The small circle of Manet's friends such

as Legros, Whistler, Fantin Latour, Duret, Vignaux, Durantz, Cladel, the etchers Belot and Desboutins, the landscape-painter Guillemet, the Orientalist Tabar and the poet-statuary Astruc, was joined by the phalanx of "the youngest ones" such as Cézanne, Renoir, Claude Monet, Degas, Sisley, Pizzarro, Berta Morissot, and Eve Gonzales. The year 1874 constitutes an historical era in the evolution of art, for about that time and through these above-mentioned artists began *plainarism* and its logical consequence—impressionism.

Now in the fight for his æsthetic *credo* Manet was no more alone; he had round him men who cherished the same ideals, followed his road, and even, as it usually happens, outstripped him by making his thoughts broader. With Manet's followers the effects of light became more varied, still stronger in their intensiveness; their pictures are stronger in colour, more realistic in the selection of their subjects; the landscape, considered until then as a kind of theatrical decoration, as a background for the represented story, became of the first importance—it laughed with the playful sun, it wept with the tears of rain, it dreamed wrapped in grey mists; a haystack, a stone near a road, a solitary pear-tree in a field, a half-destroyed fence, became subjects as worthy of the brush of an artist as is a beautiful Gothic cathedral; the changes produced by different moments of the day were noticed and considered of importance.

The years passed by, the new æsthetic grew more and more prevalent, but Manet died (born 1832, died 1883) half understood. One year after his

death in L'Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, an exhibition of Manet's work was held, but even then the watchmen and protectors of the Holy Ark Routine—the President of the Republic, Grévy, the Secretary of the Interior, Ferry, and the Director of Beaux Arts, Kaempfen—consented only half-heartedly that such an honour should be shown to Manet.

As it seems, it was not yet time for his apotheosis, for but little was said of the exhibition and the result was very insignificant.

Only after the exhibition of Manet's work in 1900 at the World's Fair, then after the Salon d'automne of 1905 and a show at Durand-Ruel's in March of 1906, did his art appear in its whole importance and the seal which his genius impressed on modern art became evident.

The tumult of the international fair, the too great crowd of people and things was not favourable for Manet's art, whose whole beauty appeared only in the quiet of the Grand Palais. Perchance the vicinity of another æsthetic idea, that of Ingres, was necessary to show us and to make us understand the filiation of "the young France." Ingres and Manet put beside each other appeared to be *maîtres ès arts* of the last epoch: Manet for his sense of Life, Ingres for his understanding of the Beautiful. Moreover, one could see then how they linked together different phases of art. The painter of "Olympia" appeared to be the continuator of the author of "Odalisques"—his completion in some sense, and both of them proved to be a plus in the sum of modern efforts and tendencies in art. From plainairism and

impressionism came out neo-impressionism ; from Ingres's classicism was originated neo-traditionalism. Those directions completing each other are predominant in modern art.

The influence of those two masters could be traced in the work of Puvis de Chavannes, in Degas, and even in that true barbarian Gauguin. From Ingres and Manet those three artists, so very different from one another, take their tendency for synthesis, simplicity, harmony of colours and ornaments ; they also, as did Ingres, gave style to form and brightness to colouring, as did Manet.

And the youngest ones, those of the present day : Maurice Denis, Valoton, Maurice Guerin, d'Espagnat, Paterne, Berrichon, Boutet de Monval, those who exhibit with "the independent" and in the "Salon d'automne," do they not evoke Ingres to help them in their fight against realism and impressionism, from which, however, they originated? There is no doubt that, notwithstanding originality and freshness of feeling and of impression, notwithstanding their personal vision and individual inspiration, they are united with Ingres and Manet by the affinity of thought and spirit.

Thus the souls of masters are grouped like planets and stars by the strength of strange and wonderful attraction ; throughout time and space they influence each other, search each other ; and although their point of contact may be very slight, one feels, however, the mystic tie that links them together.

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